THE FOO FIGHTERS' STICKSMAN INTERVIEWS HIS DRUM HEROES!

Rhythm

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ery Drummer Needs It

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STEPHEN PERKINS

ROGER TAYLOR

STEWART COPELAND

RUFUS TAYLOR

SPECIAL GUEST ED

Taylor Hawkins takes over!

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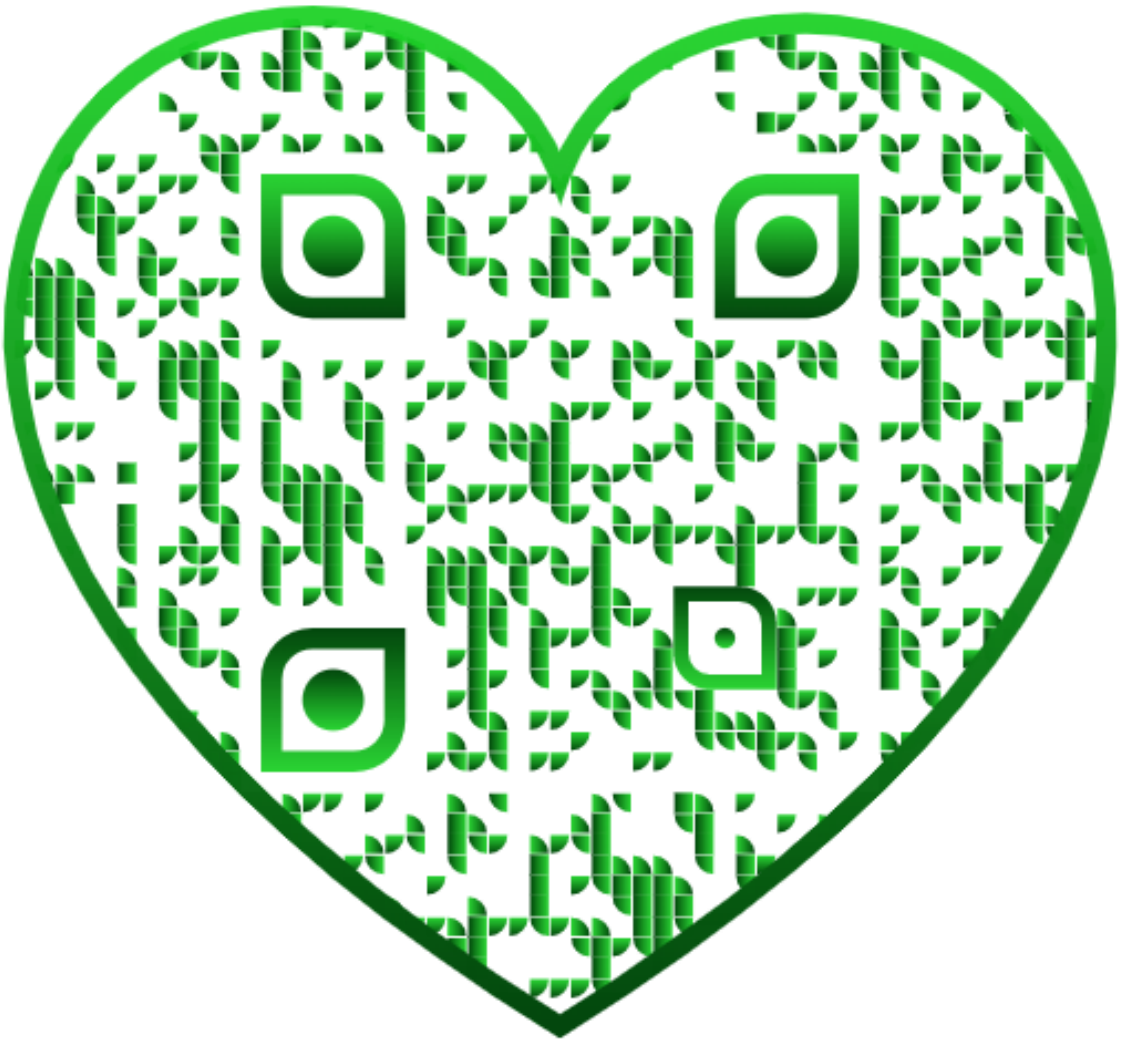

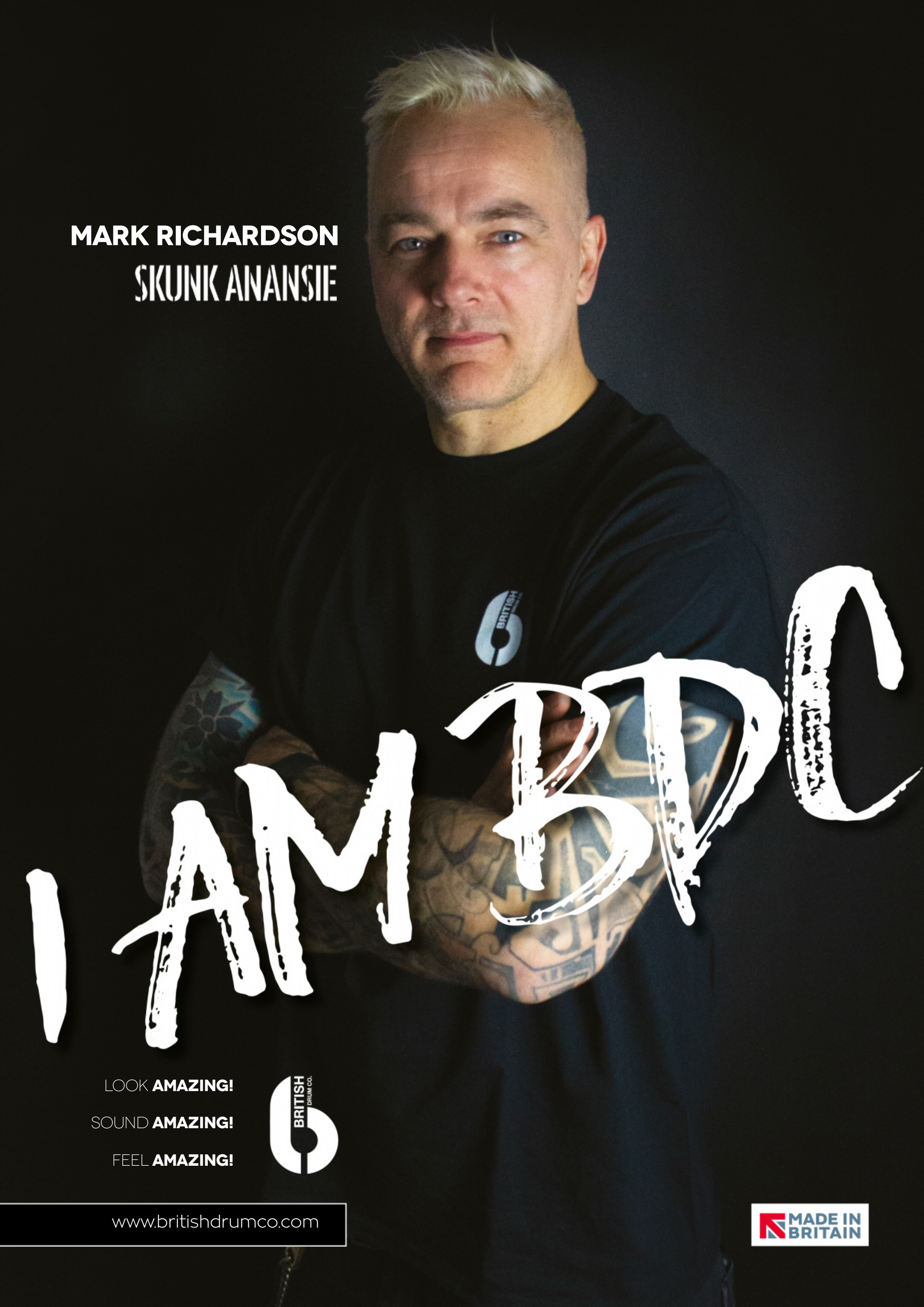
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HELLO AND WELCOME BACK TO RHYTHM...

Hi, Taylor here...

Hope that you are all keeping safe and well out there.

As I take over this issue of *Rhythm* and invite a bunch of my favourite drummers – including Matt Cameron, Phil Gould, Ty Segall, Rufus Taylor, Stewart Copeland, Stephen Perkins, Danny Goffey, Dean Butterworth and Roger Taylor – to join me, it's funny to look back and think that I originally wanted to play guitar... I persevered with the strings for a while, but it just wasn't happening, and it was my next-door neighbour in Laguna Beach, California – Kent Kleater, a musician himself – that suggested I try drums. He showed me how to do a simple rock beat – 'one', 'two', 'three', 'four' on the kick, hi-hats and snare – and as I sat there bashing out this rhythm, he looked straight at me and went, 'Dude, you are a drummer!' In a second, everything changed – it was like a lightning bolt – and I'll never forget that moment.

A few weeks later I was playing along to my favourite songs – I had found my thing – but never in my wildest dreams could I ever have imaged where that journey was going to take me. I feel so lucky to be doing what I'm doing now and to have had the experiences that I've had.

One of the greatest things about becoming a professional musician for me has been the opportunity to meet, work with and make music with some of my heroes. For all drummers, the players that inspire and influence us in the early days form an integral part of our musical DNA... To begin with, we might copy our heroes, or borrow and steal from them – I know I did! – but slowly we develop our own voice, and the drummers that have always made me sit up and take notice are the ones with a truly individual personality and sound. You know it's them as soon as you hear them, and every time I sit down to do a fill, I'm drawing on those influences and the imprint that those drummers have left on my own playing.

I always dig any opportunity to talk drums and music with people who love those two things as much as I do, and being allowed to take over *Rhythm* again – and interview drummers that inspire me – has been so much fun.

Hope you enjoy the results and look forward to seeing you at a show on the other side of all of this soon...

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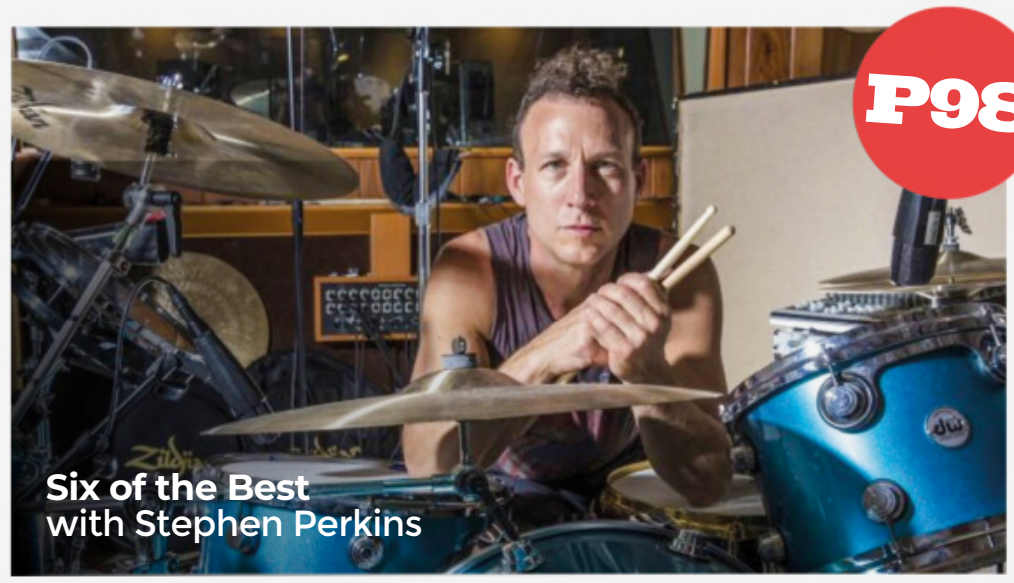

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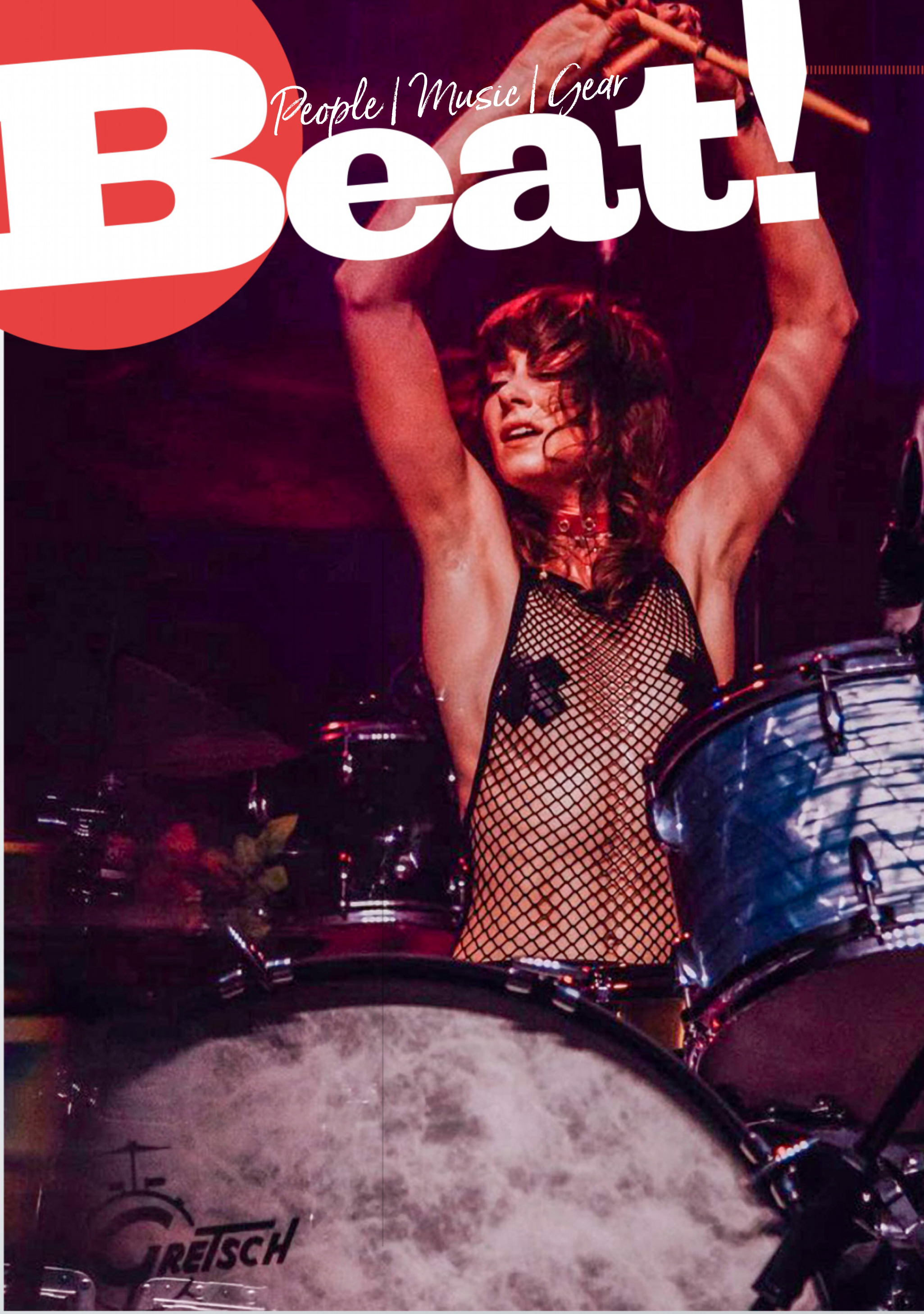

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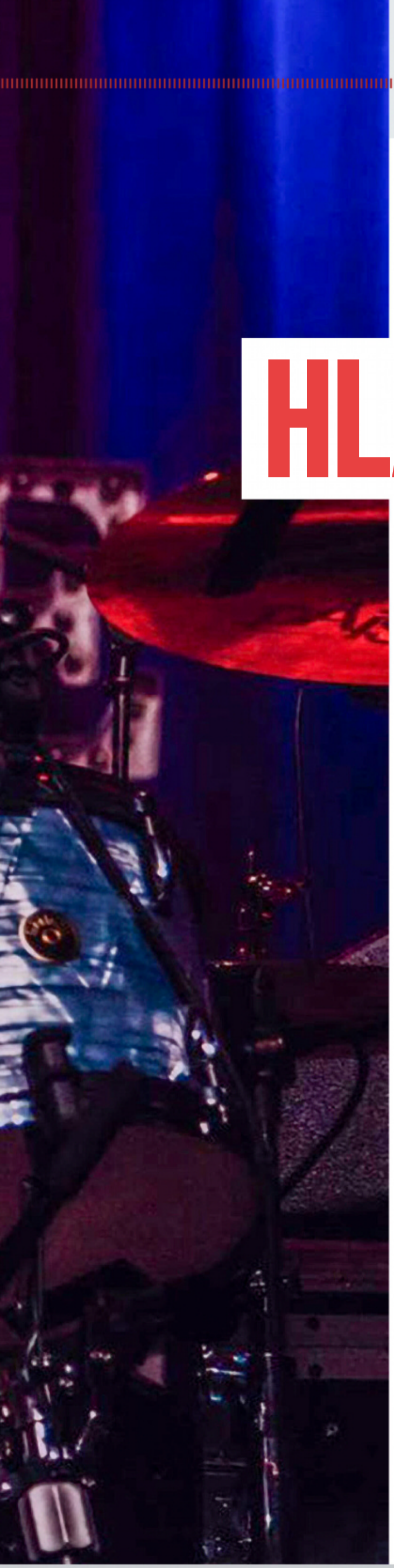

HLAG TURNS 10!

Hit Like A Girl is back and better than ever for 2021

2021 marks 10 years since the first Hit Like A Girl competition. Back at its 2011 inception, it was unclear whether a drum talent trawl for female players would get the recognition and respect from the global community that it deserved... The fact that we're here celebrating its 10th anniversary speaks for itself.

Alumni from a decade of HLAG include a plethora of inspired beatmakers from across the globe, such as Anika Nilles, De'Arcus Curry, Elise Trouw, Venzella Joy, Helen De La Rosa and Nandi Bushell, to name just a few.

Emily Moon (Starbenders, pictured), an entrant in those early years of the competition, now finds herself on this year's judging panel: "I thought the competition was such a cool way to hype female drummers up, so I ended up submitting a video into the contest for fun," she says of her first entry in 2011. "Didn't get very far into the competition (she admits with a laugh), but I made a few friendly connections with other players that I thought were badass. Never imagined I'd eventually become a judge and spokesperson for it years later!"

This idea that you don't have to win HLAG to ultimately forge partnerships and a successful career is not lost on contest Executive Director David Levine. Discussing HLAG's legacy, he says, "I'm proud to see hundreds of female drummers with millions of followers on social media and billions of views on YouTube, because that means we now have a new generation of female drum artists, teachers and heroes."

David tells *Rhythm* that a decade ago his aim was to increase the number of female drummers. Today, with a massive tick in that box, the goal is to raise quality alongside the quantity: "We started offering free educational content and lessons to our contestants," David explains, "and we now consider Hit Like A Girl a year-round advocacy for female and gender expansive drummers.

"I've often said we have enough drums but we need to make more drummers. That was the original goal of Hit Like A Girl, and it hasn't changed – I don't think it ever will. From my perspective, if more of the talented, confident and powerful people who play drums happen to be female, it's a big step forward for our art, our community and our legacy."

Getting down to the nitty gritty, so how do you enter? To be in with a chance, you need to send a video of yourself at the kit as well as a brief bio and picture. Done that? Well, if you impress in the public vote and then wow the star judges, you could scoop the top prizes. However, David reminds us that in his experience, drummers don't enter Hit Like A Girl for prizes, they do so for something far more valuable.

"They enter to be part of the community. Drummers have always supported each other. I mean, what other group of musicians have festivals and conventions like we do? But I find the girls and women are even more supportive of each other than the boys and men. Just look at the comments and connections they make with each other during the competition. Drumming was a brotherhood. Now it's a sisterhood, too."

Emily agrees, adding, "Challenge yourself, but also see it as your entry into a super-supportive, fun community!"

Entries to Hit Like A Girl 2021 are open now.
Head to: hitlikeagirlcontest.com for more details.

TALKIN' TAMA

Drum giant goes live in lockdown

Video calling and live streaming have become essential skills in the past year, but while this has taken the form of Zoom chats with family and friends for most of us, those kind bods over at Tama used the technology for something far grander.

Tama Talks launched on Instagram in the thick of the first lockdown last spring and has delivered a treasure trove of live videos – ranging from chats with A-list artists from the company's packed roster to product demos and Q&As with the Product Manager for Tama distributor Headstock, Ian Aguado-Bush (shown).

Ian explains that there was a serious reason for launching the series: "The idea came up straight away because everyone was at home, nothing was going on and the music industry had come to a horrible, grinding halt. I know the lack of interaction with people can affect your mental health, so it was to try and help people get through each day by giving them something to look forward to by the end of it."

It has quickly become its own beast though, in part thanks to guests such as Abe Cunningham from Deftones, Kenny Aronoff, Tristan Evans from The Vamps, Dave Lombardo, Pete Ray Biggin and Camille Bigeault.

"It became an opportunity for me to get on a live with people's heroes and give people a platform to interact with players that they wouldn't normally get the chance to interact with," Ian continues. "It has grown organically – I started off doing artist ones because that helps with the audience, but now when I do the product videos the viewing figures are the same as the artist ones."

Luckily for us, it sounds like Ian and Tama are just getting started. "The feedback has been insane," says Ian. "We have people from all over the world tuning into these videos that I started just as a way to help people during lockdown. I want to do a special Tama Talks next with a big product launch and big artists."

Tune into Tama Talks on Tama UK's Instagram page.

Image: Tom Pullen

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TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

SNAPSHOT

This Moment In History

Taylor Hawkins & Stewart Copeland

30th April 2005

"I remember the first time I heard The Police," says Taylor. "I was 10 years old and had just started playing drums. My older brother, Jason – the cool one out of us – gave me *Zenyatta Mondatta* and said, 'This guy is the best drummer. You need to do this'. I was only a kid, but the drums leapt out because Stewart had such an individual style and sound... Those bright cymbals, shallow toms and that high-pitched cracking snare were all part of Stewart's unique voice, as were the 'colours' he added to his playing and the fact that you learned to expect the unexpected – he would constantly surprise you! It was a special day when I got chance to jam with him when I first took over *Rhythm* way back in 2005..."

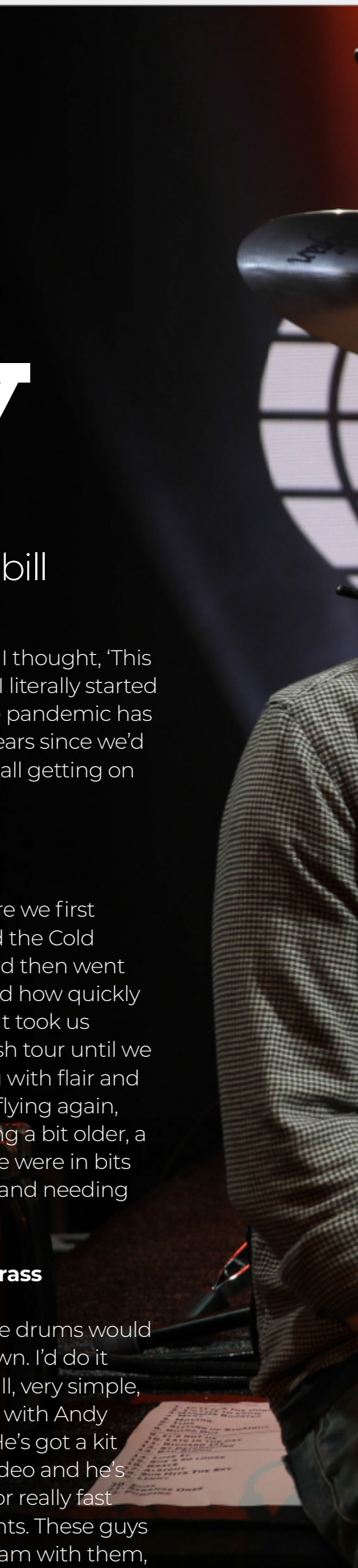
Image: Alex Solca

Welcome back

Danny Goffey

SUPERGRASS, SOLO

The return of Supergrass, disco punk and a drumming double bill



What have you been doing over lockdown?
"I've been really busy. I think generally it's like a triumph for the introverts, the lockdown, because if you're creative in any way, it's a great opportunity just to come up with some ideas and work on projects in your mind.

"I've managed to write and record an album of my own stuff, which is being mastered in Abbey Road this week, and write a book that goes with it – about a has-been popstar that lives in a small village in Somerset and has to deal with his wife and kids being mean to him. It's like a day in my life in a weird way. My son is drawing all the illustrations for each chapter. It's a bit like *Adrian Mole* or *Bridget Jones*, that sort of vibe. At the moment it's called *A Day In The Life Of A Dwindling Star*."

Is the music in a similar vibe to 2018's *Schtick*?
"It's kind of similar. It's probably not quite as full-on, fast rock 'n' roll, though there are some quite fast songs. Maybe a bit more Talking Heads – it's quite odd but really good. I think it's the best one I've done. I work with a guy called Simon Byrt, we co-produce and play most of the stuff. It's a bit like disco punk, I'd say."

What drums do you use for recording?
"I've got a little on-and-off deal with Gretsch. I took my touring Supergrass kit and used that in the studio last summer when we weren't touring, and I was sent a load of percussion from Natal, so used one of their snare drums. But Gretsch is my kit I tour with and play about with in the studio. I take the skin off the bass drum, stuff it full of crap, tune it high or low, all that stuff."

Was the Supergrass reunion curtailed by the global pandemic?
"We managed to do some early gigs in Europe which were great, and then we finished off a British tour with two nights at the Alexandra Palace in London. Literally, a week after that we went into lockdown – so we were really lucky to finish our tour, but it messed up everything for that year, obviously.

"I live in Somerset, near Glastonbury, and I know all the people at the Glastonbury Festival quite well. We had a great slot late in the evening, and I remember on the 25th of June last year, I was sitting in my garden having a bottle of wine, looking at the sunset, and I thought, 'This is the time we would have gone on', and I literally started crying. It really hit me then, the effect the pandemic has had and the really fun year we lost. Ten years since we'd split up – we were playing really well and all getting on really well, so it was a bugger."

Was it easy to get back in the groove with Supergrass?
"We booked our old rehearsal room where we first formed the band in Oxford, a place called the Cold Rooms. We did four days of rehearsals and then went straight into the tour. I was really surprised how quickly my hands just did what they used to do. It took us probably until half-way through the British tour until we were totally back on the bike and playing with flair and fun. Ten gigs in and suddenly you're just flying again, which is a great feeling. As we're all getting a bit older, a lot of the songs are really fast bpms, so we were in bits after some of the gigs, extremely sweaty and needing lots of vodka and Red Bull."

Did you miss drumming while Supergrass was disbanded?
"No. It's weird. I made little demos, but the drums would just be a tool to get some sort of beat down. I'd do it quite quickly and not play it very well at all, very simple, Beatles-style stuff. I'm quite good friends with Andy [Burrows] who used to be in Razorlight. He's got a kit set up in his new house – he did a little video and he's so good. I can't even do triplets properly or really fast paradiddles. I'm terrible with my rudiments. These guys are just so accomplished, if I ever had to jam with them, I'd probably just be in tears because I'd be exposed for the charlatan I am.

"Actually, me and Andy are thinking about doing an album together of two drummers, so he can do all the really cool, hardcore stuff, and I can do the sloppy stuff over the top to make it feel weird and a bit psychedelic. We were going to call ourselves Dandy. That might be on the cards." **David West**

Key kit: *Gretsch drums, Natal percussion, Zildjian cymbals*

Image: David Phillips

Zildjian
REMO
GRETSCH

Images: Emily Dolan Davies

STANDING OUT!

Emily Dolan Davies shares a life lesson about staying true to who you are

In a world full of loud social media where everyone is vying for your (or someone else's) attention, standing out from the crowd seems an impossible task. For years, I would look at what other drummers were doing, being in awe and trying to imitate their playing, style or chops – leaving me feeling unworthy, unfulfilled and fading into the background of my own life.

My whole mindset shifted after a series of events in 2011, and I realised that life is short, and I can't be bothered to fit into other people's moulds anymore!

I proceeded to chop off most of my hair (something I'd wanted to do as a kid), remembered what it was about drumming and music that sparked my passion in the first place and dedicated myself to the things that I loved most.

It was from that very moment that others started really taking notice of the kind of player I was – and started calling me for gigs.

Now, I'm not saying it was all

sunshine and rainbows. When I first decided to lean into who I was, I was terrified. It's much easier to handle rejection if you're putting a mask on and showing a version of yourself, but to be rejected for just being you... Oooof!

I did (and still do) get rejected at auditions or for gigs, but I reframed the experience. Now I see it as a great filter for things that are a bad fit for me, saving me a lot of time, energy and heartache, whilst leaving me open to more synergetic opportunities.

You aren't meant to be all things to all people – and wasting energy trying to do so will grind down your inspiration, drive and motivation pretty quickly.

As I sit here writing this, it's hard not to recognise that I've never felt so happy in my career, with the wonderful people and opportunities I have surrounding me. I choose to believe that that moment of leaning in to who I am was a turning point to where I am now.

So, remember: there's only one you, who has your background, experience and playing style. Imagine standing out, even being known and celebrated for just being exactly who you are anyway! I'd go for that option every time.

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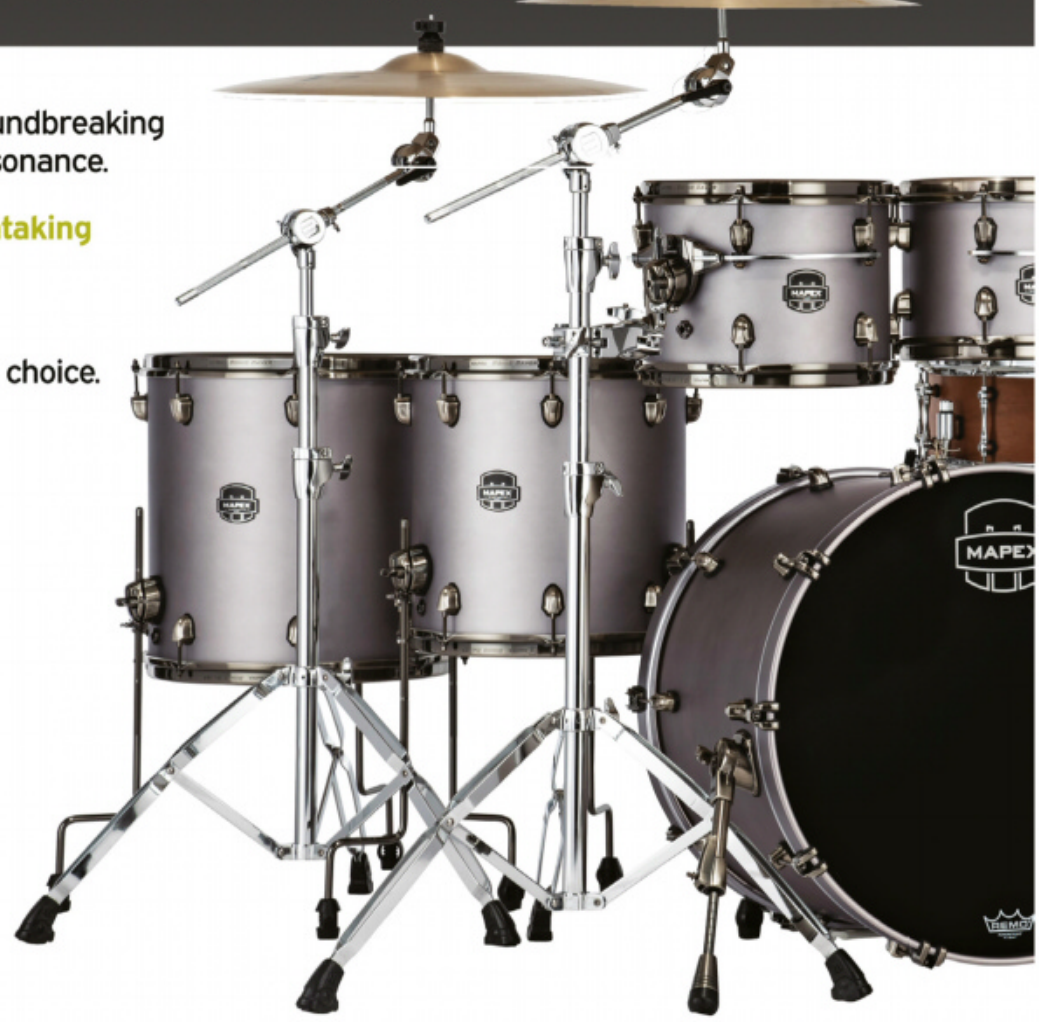

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Welcome back

Dean Butterworth

GOOD CHARLOTTE, SUGAR RAY, SESSIONS

From big, juicy rock grooves to embracing the spaces between the notes

Dean was touring with Sugar Ray last March when the call came: "You need to fly home. Everything's cancelled," he recalls. Now he's back in LA and back on the practice pad...

What lay behind Good Charlotte's decision to release a single, 'Last December', to close 2020?
"It was the 20th anniversary of the first, self-titled record. We've been talking about making music – we always are – and that song lyrically is loosely talking about what's going on in the world, the craziness. We always like to talk about real stuff, real subject matters and life, so it was fun to make."

What drums did you use for that track?
"Tama Starclassic bubinga/birch kit, 22"x18" kick, 12" rack, 16" floor. I used a brass Starphonic 14"x6" which has got a nice pop to it, and two 20" Paiste crashes – I didn't play a ride cymbal, I just set up what I needed for that particular song, so it was like a Ringo Starr kit, which worked out really well. White coated heads on the top of the toms – just a big, juicy rock sound."

Are there plans for more new music from Good Charlotte?
"We've been talking about trying to put a song out every quarter. Everything's changed from 10, 15 years ago when it was very album driven. Now it's single driven. I'm sure there will be a full record at some point. For any band when it starts, your dream is that everybody around the world will love it – and then, of course, once you get that, you've sold out, but that's another story... You want to get a record deal and all that stuff, then you get a hit, and the record label wants 25 more 'Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous'.

"We've played that game with hit singles, now we've all agreed that we have to be inspired with what we're doing. Although we've had success, everyone is older and more mature. That's extremely important to the five of us these days – making everything we do together fun."

How have you adjusted to life off the road?
"I've been travelling for most of my life, which has been great. At first I thought of it as a forced vacation. I get to hang out with my dogs and practice, and it couldn't have been further from that. I've gotten into a routine; I go to my drum room, I warm up, then I tape myself on my phone playing to a click or playing to records – like Steely Dan or my favourite drummers, Jeff Porcaro, John JR Robinson, Stewart Copeland, Carlton Barrett from Bob Marley and the Wailers, Stevie Wonder. That's been my thing, working on groove stuff, making the pocket feel good for when I get hired to play on records or whatever it may be.

"I practice in the afternoon on my pad with rudiments. When I was little, my dad gave me a metronome, a pad and a pair of 2B drumsticks, and because he was a drummer, he's like, 'You've got to be able to play double strokes and paradiddles to this click'. He was very strict: 'No drum set until you can get this worked out'.

"Steve Gadd said the space between the notes is more important than the notes, so I'm thinking about how that subliminal thing happens in drumming where it sounds like there is more going on than there is – and that's this space between the notes.

"Other than that, I play guitar and keyboard, and I've been writing with the guys in Sugar Ray."

How have you changed as a drummer over two decades of touring and recording?
"I think the most important thing is taking things away – less is more. When I was really young, I used to play too much, thinking it's a good idea to play a fill in the middle of a verse when someone is singing. Then I get up and sing, and it's so much better when it's just grooves. Let's say you're playing a 'Billie Jean' groove, '2' and '4', kick-snare, and you open the hi-hat on the 'and' of '4'... Well, after 16 bars that's going to stand out rather than always thinking you need to play a fill.

"I always go back to my top 10 drummers, like Gadd, he's just so musical. He's respectful to the song, whether it's Chick Corea or 'Chuck E's In Love' by Rickie Lee Jones. A lot of guys want to show you how fast they can play, it's nice to have the facility, but it's so important to respect the song and play for the song." **David West**

Key kit: *Tama drums, hardware and pedals, Paiste cymbals, Promark sticks, Evans drumheads*

Image: Erik Rojas

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

SNAPSHOT

This Moment In History

Alex Van Halen

"I've always loved Alex Van Halen's drumming," Taylor says, "and I like to call him the 'king of swing', because he really did bring that Gene Krupa sense of swing to those powerful rock 'n' roll grooves in Van Halen. He and his brother, Eddie, actually grew up playing swing – their dad was a big band musician – so they were essentially fusion heads playing heavy metal!

"It's hard to find your room when you're in a band with a guitar player like Eddie and David Lee Roth, but Alex was the leader – in every sense of the word – and one solid, badass drummer who energised and drove those Van Halen classics. I loved the fact that he had three bass drums – the whole 'over the topness' of it all – and the fun that he had with that insanely big drum set. He was always cheeky in that sense, but at the root of everything was that unbelievable double bass drumming and those fast tom rolls of his – all of which were on show from the off on their very first album, *Van Halen*. Who didn't want to learn how to play double bass drums after hearing the intro for 'Hot For Teacher'?"

Image: Michele Eve Sandberg/Corbis via Getty Images

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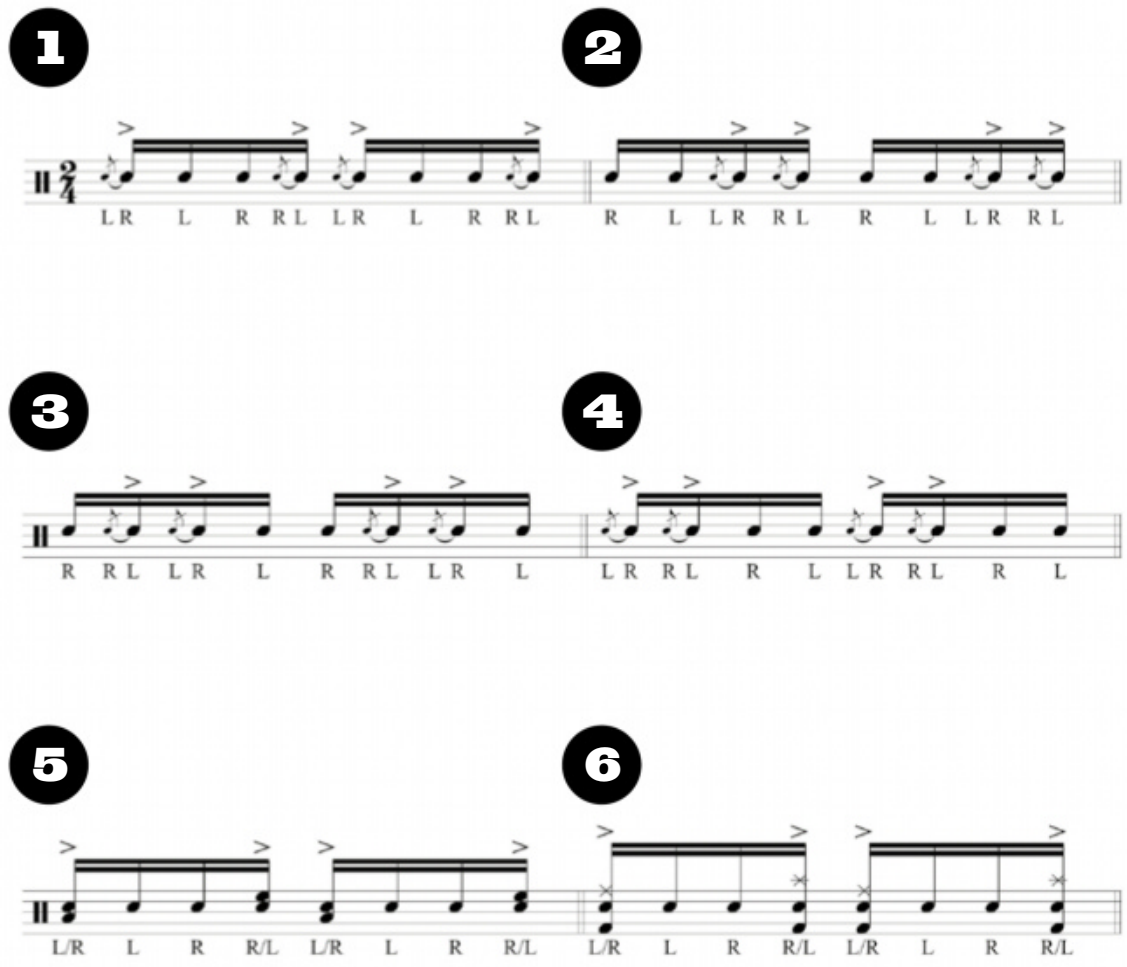
Rudiment Of The Month

Patafla-fla



Our exploration of the various flam rudiments continues this issue with amusingly titled Patafla-fla. And like many rudiments, the name is onomatopoeic: 'pata' relating to two single strokes and the 'fla-fla' being two flams.

With this in mind, you'd expect the basic figure to be written as single, single, flam, flam – however, it's traditionally notated one note out of sync as is shown in Ex 1, while the figure that the name Patafla-fla actually implies is in fact seen in Ex 2.

Exs 3 and 4 are the remaining two permutations, placing the flams either in the middle or at the beginning.

Technically speaking, the Patafla-fla is all about being able to execute two hand-to-hand flams within single strokes, something that requires the development of quick reflexes.

However, once you've mastered this it can move to the kit quite effectively as Exs 5 and 6 show, with the accented notes from the flams being played on the toms or cymbals, respectively.

OFFBEATS

CJ SHARES WISDOM

Not content with touring and recording with some of the music world's biggest stars – Madonna, Lady Gaga, Rihanna, Snoop Dogg – Chris Johnson has just penned a book. The new release, *Pop, R&B and Gospel Drumming*, also features interviews with artists such as Aaron Spears and Brian Frasier-Moore.

MILFORD GRAVES RIP

Influential jazz drummer Milford Graves has passed away at the age of 79. Graves, who collaborated with the likes of Lou Reed, Anthony Braxton and John Zorn in a long, lauded career, died of congestive heart failure. Born in Queens in 1941, Graves began playing at the age of three and later became one of the leading figures of the free jazz movement.

NO REGRETS FOR TC

Tommy Clufetos has given a philosophical response about missing out in favour of Brad Wilk when it came to record Black Sabbath's final album, *13*. "That's show business," the Sabs touring drummer told Eddie Trunk. "I'm glad I got to do the tours, and I think I made a good dent, and I was very proud of what I did on stage with those guys."

WILL GLASER

Hands up – we dropped a bit of a clanger in Issue 298. The eagle-eyed amongst you will have spotted that in Will Glaser's 'Introducing' interview, we displayed the incorrect album artwork for Glaser's *Climbing In Circles*. Sorry!

JIM CAPALDI

Short Cut Draw Blood, Jim Capaldi's celebrated third solo album from 1975 – and his first after the breakup of Traffic – has just been re-released on digital. This remastered masterpiece was originally recorded at Muscle Shoals Sound Studio in Alabama and Island Studios in London and includes the hit 'Love Hurts'.

TRACKS THAT INSPIRED A GENERATION

★★★★★

Stewart Copeland

'Spanish Castle Magic'
The Jimi Hendrix Experience – *Axis: Bold As Love (1967)*
Drummer: Mitch Mitchell

"I was 16 years old when I first heard this track – courtesy of my dorky friend at school who just happened to have great taste in music. Human beings are a bit like ducks, in that when a duckling cracks out of its shell the first warm being it sees is 'mama' – and, for us humans, whoever is the rock star du jour when we turn 16 becomes our 'daddy'. For me, it was Jimi Hendrix and Mitch Mitchell...

"The amazing thing about Mitch is that he was overshadowed by Jimi, but he really did give as good as he got... He was revolutionary, explosive, exciting, creative – everything that you could want and wish for in a hero.

"Many drummers claim to have been jazz players – Mitch never made any such claims, but he really did have the light touch and technique of jazz drumming. Of course, it didn't sound like jazz because he wasn't playing jazz music, but a lot of his flamadiddles, cross rhythms, triplets, technique and rudiments were all jazz, and he was out there with those long phrases... Instead of the four-bar concept, he would play a 16-bar phrase with a rhythm that didn't evolve until those 16 bars had gone by. Very, very complex but also right on the money with the punch. He might have had horrible posture, but man he could bang those drums!

"There is so much of Mitch on show in 'Spanish Castle Magic' – he literally does not stop – and, at my age, it makes me feel tired just listening to it in its entirety! He has so many different chops – the triplets against four, all kinds of different licks... It's like a drum solo all the way through. In fact, I don't even think there is a backbeat; it's just an obscure rhythm where the drums never stop doing cool stuff.

"And one thing I always loved about that trio is that they never really respected the song – it was just there as a coat hanger on which to hang all those blazing licks, riffs and fills.

"I was a late bloomer as a kid, but when I banged on the drums, I instantly became an 800lb Silverback. Whenever I suffered social embarrassment or a slight, the image of a giant drum fill, such as played by Mitch Mitchell, would address the insult and infamy, and I would face the adversity by jumping on the drums and banging out a loud offering of my own.

"Regrettably, I only saw The Experience play live once, and I have to confess that I was disappointed. They were the first professional band I had ever seen, and even though the teenage fan boy in me was blown away by the religious experience, the sound and amplification were horrible – I couldn't hear anything!

"I was in Bob Henrit's Drum Store in London once when who should walk in but Mitch Mitchell... I just froze, observed and didn't make a connection. It was always a fantasy of mine that one day I'd be in a music shop, playing and checking out some cool drums, when Jimi Hendrix and the gang would turn up, hear me play, tell me I was great and invite me back to theirs to jam... Me and Jimi would become best friends, and then, of course, I'd figure out a way of kicking poor Mitch out of the picture...

"Unfortunately, when my dream became reality, it was only Mitch that showed up, and all I could do was trade knowing glances with the store manager!" R

Images: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images

TRIXON DRUMS

Vintage
CIRCA 1960/67

A Vintage View special history of the rise and fall of the fondly remembered German percussion brand

Writer: **Geoff Nicholls** | Images: **James Cumpsty**

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

"I've always liked the quirkiness of Trixon drums – they're really unique – and I actually have three kits myself. The punch of the little 20" kicks is great, and I've used them on solo projects and on the Foo Fighters' *Sonic Highways*. I thought it would be fun to take a look back at the history of these weird and wonderful drums, so without further ado, it's over to *Rhythm*'s guru of all things vintage, Geoff Nicholls..."

Two great 20th century musical sagas are closely associated with the bustling, edgy city of Hamburg – Germany's major port situated on the River Elbe in the north. One became rather famous – The Beatles – who cut their live teeth in the seedy St Pauli district. The other, always guaranteed to bring a smile to the drummer's face, is Trixon. A smile because Trixon is synonymous with weirdly shaped drums – the conical Telstar and the flattened ellipsoid Speedfire.

From the Ashes

Hamburg was devastated by Allied bombing in 1943. Once peace finally came, the German people had somehow to get on with rebuilding commerce and infrastructure. One 30-year-old entrepreneur who quickly did both was Karl-Heinz Weimer.

Karl started Trixon in 1947 in a bombed-out shell of a building and steadily built his empire to include the top music megastore Music City (opened in 1955) and a 4,000-square-metre factory in Reinbek, just east of Hamburg, employing 140 by 1966.

Germany was host to a large American and British military presence following the war, and they wanted to hear jazz and, later, rock 'n' roll. Jazz and swing had been suppressed under the Nazis, while numerous instruments had been lost or destroyed in the war.

As it happens, Hamburg had actually been a renowned hotbed of swing music – the 'Swing Kids' – in the mid-30s, and Weimer, a musician himself, now sensed a market for a modern American-style drum set.

From Luxus to Speedfire

Weimer started out building 'normal' cylindrical drums, and the 0/200 Luxus became Trixon's conventional kit throughout its entire history.

All Trixon drums fall into two broad eras according to their lugs, which basically are of two types. The various earlier forms of teardrop-shaped cast lugs were seen up until around 1963, after which they were replaced by the more modern-looking oblong box lugs, set on black or grey plastic plinths.

Those resonance-enhancing plinths were just one example of several ingenious Trixon hardware designs and innovations, which were tried with varying degrees of success. For example, stands had 'klick-klack' spring-loaded folding legs with no need of wing screws; bass drum cymbal mounts pioneered the use of ball joints; and there was even a double hi-hat stand.

As well as drums and eye-catching hardware, Trixon produced a whole catalogue of Latin and ▷

Trixon Luxus kit 0/200 (c.1960)

Trixon's 'normal' kit was the enduring Luxus, seen here with the earlier teardrop lugs. Note the ball socket cymbal mount – a Trixon innovation. Aquamarine Sparkle was one of eight sparkle wrap finishes on offer.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:
SIMON JOHN'S VINTAGE DRUM SHOW
www.vintagedrums.co.uk

tuned percussion. Weimer was as inventive as he was ambitious, and as early as 1956 he came up with a radical kit, the Speedfire 0/700. For this, a small bass drum and a larger bass drum were merged side by side in the same shell, separated internally by a plywood panel. Hence the flattened egg ellipsoid shape with a straight bottom edge on which to clamp two bass drum pedals.

On top of this, Weimer added from one to five single-headed concert toms, the larger three mounted the 'wrong' way on a console-style tube frame. Finally, there was the enormous 20" Lionel Hampton Attraction floor tom with specially strengthened V-shaped legs. This was in honour of the great American jazz multi-instrumentalist who became Trixon's star endorsee in the '50s.

Hampton played Trixon vibraphones and drums and became a lifelong friend of Weimer. It was not unknown for the dapper 'Hamp' to jump on his monster tom and continue battering it while juggling his sticks (this decades prior to Keith Moon's rather clumsier antics).

From Telstar to Vox

The Speedfire featured in memorable corny adverts with Bill 'Rock Around The Clock' Haley 'crowning' his drummer, Dave Holly. And for a brief time, Trixon became quite popular in the UK. Irrepressible entrepreneur Ivor Arbiter imported them as a rival to the home market hoggers, Premier, around the turn of the '60s. Sensible Luxus outfits were played by leading UK drummers, including Phil Seamen, Allan Ganley, Brian Bennett, Clem Cattini and many others.

In the midst of this, Trixon's most famous kit was launched – the 1962 conical-shelled Telstar, named for the original multinational telecommunications satellite. Telstars were visually a blast, although some suggest this was where Trixon started to lose the plot. You'd see them on the telly with Gerry 'You'll Never Walk Alone' and his Pacemakers, or Freddie and his Dreamers.

It wasn't just to grab attention though, because again there was a logic to Weimer's seeming gimmick. The idea was to focus and intensify projection, with the conical shells likened to megaphones, an idea taken up in the '70s by North and Staccato with their synthetic alpine-horn shells.

Vox to the End

By the mid-60s, Trixon's turnover reached 3m Deutschmarks and Weimer was set to break into the USA market. A distribution deal was struck with the Thomas Organ Company who peddled Vox amplifiers in the USA. Vox amps were all the rage, synonymous with The Beatles and

Vox Telstar set (c.1967)
(Trixon Speedfire 0700/1)
Trixon drums were badged as Vox in the USA from 1967 and the kits renamed. This Red Sparkle set is one of two Vox kits belonging to Dave Prince that are featured in the Arctic Monkeys' video for 'Four Out Of Five'.

Trixon Telstar model 2000 kit (c. 1962)
The definitive conical shelled Telstar in rare Gold Croco. Of all Trixon finishes the exotic Croco wraps remain the most memorable and were in fact introduced with the Telstar in 1962.

Trixon Speedfire 0700/3 kit
(c 1963/4)
The '3' denotes the number of concert toms. The Lionel Hampton Attraction 20" floor tom has specially strengthened legs. Oblong lugs on plinths were standard from 1963 on.

numerous others. So, the drums were rebadged as Vox for the States. The kit names were altered as well, the Luxus becoming the Thunderbolt, the Telstar the Fanjet and the Speedfire, confusingly, the Telstar.

Vox equipment – including the drums – featured on stage with James Brown in 1968, and even Buddy Rich played a Trixon Luxus kit in 1967 during his European tour. Unfortunately, that was the summit of the Trixon journey. UK drummers migrated to American drums as they became widely obtainable during the '60s. Weimer then made a fatal mistake. He transferred most of his production (including manufacturing plant) to Shannon in Ireland.

With significant Irish government tax-break incentives and with Shannon en route to the USA, it looked like a smart move. But it ended in disaster when the Rippen piano company that Trixon had allied with went bust in 1971, taking Trixon down with them.

In retrospect, with the competition from the USA and the Japanese juggernaut gaining traction, Trixon had probably just about run its course.

The End of Trixon

For lovers of vintage drums, Trixon today occupies a special place. For a brief period as the dull '50s transitioned into the technicolour '60s, Trixon's experimental shapes and startling finishes added some much-needed fun and ingenuity to the drum set's story.

These amazing kits are all part of the extensive UK collection of Dave Prince. https://princedrums.com/

FIRST LOOK

SHINY NEW DRUM STUFF TO LUST AFTER

1: VOX Telstar Maple
Price: TBC
The re-imagination of the classic kit from the '60s has been reimagined once more for 2021 with maple shells this time for their warm tone and deep bass. The quirky oval bass drum offers different tones depending on where it's struck.
www.voxamps.com

2: Zildjian K Sweet Pack
Price: £1,029
Zildjian's versatile K Sweet Series cymbals are now available in a single, more affordable pack. This oversized configuration – comprising 15" hi-hats, 17" and 19" crashes and a medium-weight 21" ride – gives out a lower pitch and darker sound.
www.zildjian.com

3: Mapex Chris Adler Signature Warbird Snare
Price: £559
This cheeky 12"x5½" signature drum features the striking Warbird artwork etched into the maple/walnut shell. SONIClear bearing edges give an increased tuning range, while the small dimensions enhance articulation.
www.mapexdrums.com

4: Ludwig Acro Brass and Acro Copper Snares
Price: TBC
New for 2021, Ludwig's classic Acrolite is now available in brass or copper. The 14"x6½" drums each feature a seamless beaded 1mm shell with 10 bowtie lugs, P86 throw-off, triple-flanged hoops and an aged Keystone badge.
www.ludwig-drums.com

5: One O One Drums Diamond Hoops
Price: From 1,445 SEK (£125)
These 14" hoops are made from the same composite wood-fibre material that 101 uses to build its drum shells. They describe the sound as "more mellow, juicy and less sharp" when compared with die-cast hoops and promise a best-of-both-worlds between metal and wood hoops.
www.oneoonedrums.com

6: Tama Club Jam Suitcase Kit
Price: £359
The new Club Jam kit from Tama is certainly one for those who like to travel light. As if last year's model wasn't compact enough, the new suitcase edition has a bass drum that splits in two, allowing the whole kit to be nested for easy transportation.
www.tama.com

7. CAD 4-Piece Drum Mic Pack
Price: £145
This entry-range mic set caters for a kick, snare, rack tom and floor tom without breaking the bank. The dynamic mic pack comes with clips for the snare and toms and a protective carrying case.
www.cadaudio.com

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FIRST LOOK

SHINY NEW DRUM STUFF TO LUST AFTER

1: Mapex Armoury Finishes
Price: From £749
With two stunning lacquer burst finishes released this year, there are now a total of seven colour options for Mapex's mid-range Armoury Series. The Night Sky Burst (pictured) and Rainforest Burst are available on all maple/birch hybrid shells.
www.mapexdrums.com

2: Tuner Fish Lug Locks
Price: From £4.99
Tuner Fish Lug Locks have officially relaunched with an extended product range and fully recyclable packaging. The little swimmers (which top your tension rods and prevent them de-tuning) are available in six colours. The range also includes new Tone Gels.
www.tunerfishluglocks.com

3: Armand Zildjian Personal Collection
Price: £1,999
In celebration of what would have been Armand Zildjian's 100th birthday, Zildjian is releasing 100 limited-edition cymbal sets, hand selected, each with a 20" Vintage A, a pair of limited-edition drumsticks, gloves and a certificate of authenticity.
www.zildjian.com

4: Kustom KDA50 Drum Amp
Price: £209
This 50-watt e-drum amp is a compact solution for your monitoring needs. The 10" woofer cone and 2½" tweeter pack a surprising amount of volume into a compact cabinet. The mono speaker has two ¼" instrument inputs plus another for a play-along source.
www.kustom.com

5. Jobeky Rubber E-Cymbals
Price: From £85
Known for its internal trigger systems and stunning range of 'real' e-cymbals, British company Jobeky are for the first time offering a selection of rubber cymbal pads. The trio of affordable e-cymbals includes 12" and 13.3" dual-zone options and a 15.6" triple-zone pad (£85, £99 and £125, respectively).
www.jobekydrums.co.uk

6. Ludwig Legacy Mahogany Black Cat Kit
Price: TBC
Made in homage to the historic Black Panther Kit of the '60s, this limited-edition kit is constructed using Ludwig's three-ply mahogany/poplar shell with solid maple reinforcement rings and satin black maple counter hoops with silver sparkle inlays.
www.ludwig-drums.com

7: Paiste Signature Re-Releases
Price: From £430
For 2021, the Swiss cymbal maker has relaunched a number of classic models featuring its Signature Alloy. These include 19" and 20" Power crashes, 20" and 22" Power rides and 14" and 15" Power hi-hats. There's also a 14" Heavy hi-hat and 22" Mellow ride.
www.paiste.com

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Drumlines

This issue sees **Stu Warmington** interviewing the Director of the Chicago Bears Drumline

Images: Courtesy of Chicago Bears Drumline

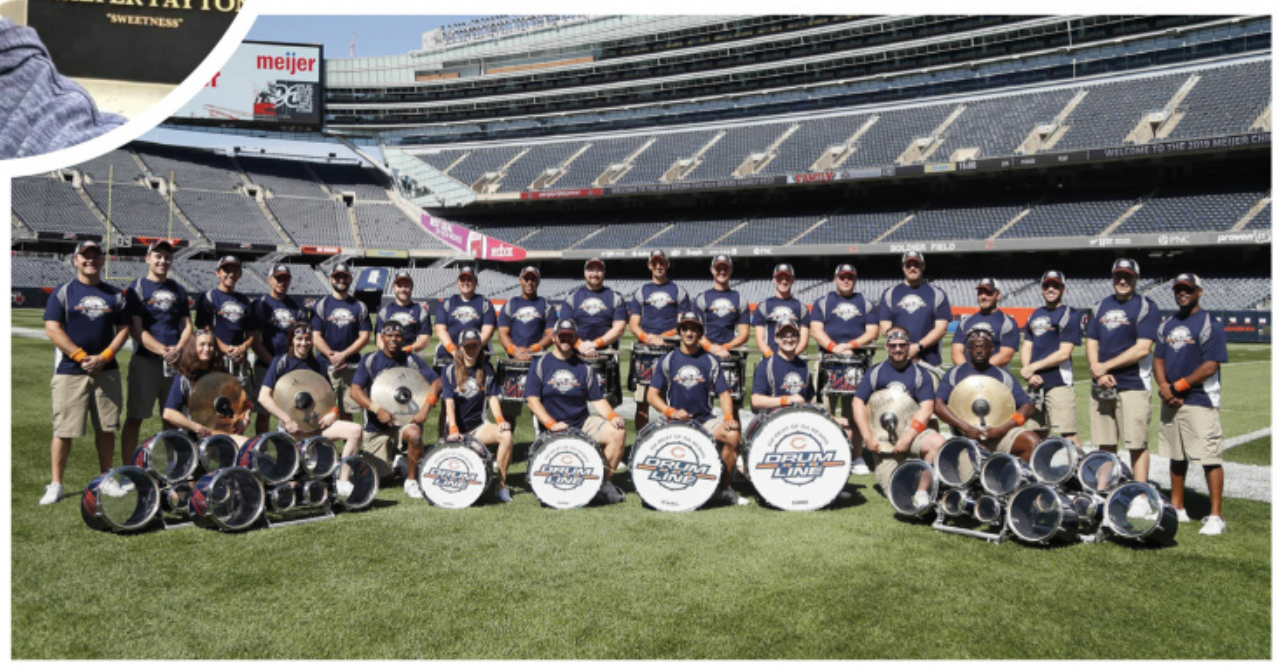
I hope you enjoyed the first installment of the new marching column in Issue 298 – and as we leave the Magic Kingdom, we head across the USA to the Windy City, where we continue in this issue with the Chicago Bears Drumline.

The full, official name for this group is 'Chicago Bears Drumline brought to you by The Pride Store', but for ease of this article we will continue to use Chicago Bears Drumline (CBDL).

The Chicago Bears Drumline was founded in 2005 as an ensemble presented by the World Champion Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps. The membership has consisted of performers from drum corps such as The Cavaliers, Phantom Regiment, Glassmen, Madison Scouts, Star of Indiana and Pioneer. In addition, members have represented college marching bands, such as the University of Illinois, Illinois State, Michigan, Michigan State, Ohio State, Kentucky, Northern Illinois, Indiana, Texas, Texas State and more!

As one of the pioneers of the professional sports entertainment drumlines, this ensemble has had the privilege of supporting the Chicago Bears and engaging Bears fans in venues including their training camp in Bourbonnais, the 2018 NFL Hall of Fame Game and, most notably, the 2011 International Series and the 2012 Super Bash – both held in London, England.

Brandon Estes (pictured below), Director of the Chicago Bears Drumline since 2011, has been a member of the CBDL since 2008 as a snare drummer and still performs with the ensemble. His responsibilities include "being the primary liaison between the Events and Entertainment Department and the CBDL, personnel management (audition process, facilitating rehearsals, scheduling for game day appearances, etc.), programming music/repertoire (composing, arranging, acquiring, choreography) as well as equipment maintenance and management".



At what age did you start drumming and how did you get into it?

"I officially began drumming in the 6th grade (age 11). I continued in band all throughout high school. In high school, I also began my marching percussion career on the bassline during my freshman year. Then in my sophomore year, I started on a marching snare and have played that instrument ever since. In my junior year at high school, I began marching drum corps (98-00 Pioneer, 01-02 Madison Scouts), and I spent three years of college in a marching band (snareline) at Texas State University."

What would you say is your biggest drumming influence?

"From a marching percussion composition and arrangement standpoint, my drumming influence has definitely been Paul Rennick. His writing style is musical, yet technically challenging. Lots of phrasing and shaping that is musically appropriate, interweaving between primary and

counter melodies.

"From a marching percussion ensemble/drumming performance standpoint, I will forever and always be a superfan of the 1995 top six Drum Corps International (DCI) drumlines. From the Madison Scouts to The Cavaliers and The Blue Devils, 1995 was quite a special year for DCI shows and marching percussion sections!"

What made you want to join the CBDL?

"I marched five years of drum corps, and after aging out [*aging out is used in reference to Drum Corps International rules that state that drum corps members above the age of 18 to 21 are denied the ability to compete in World Class*], I taught high school drumlines, WGI drumlines, as well as drum corps. I thought that my performance days were done, so I was very thankful to have this new creative outlet to perform in."

Which other professional sports drumlines would you most like to collaborate in performance with?

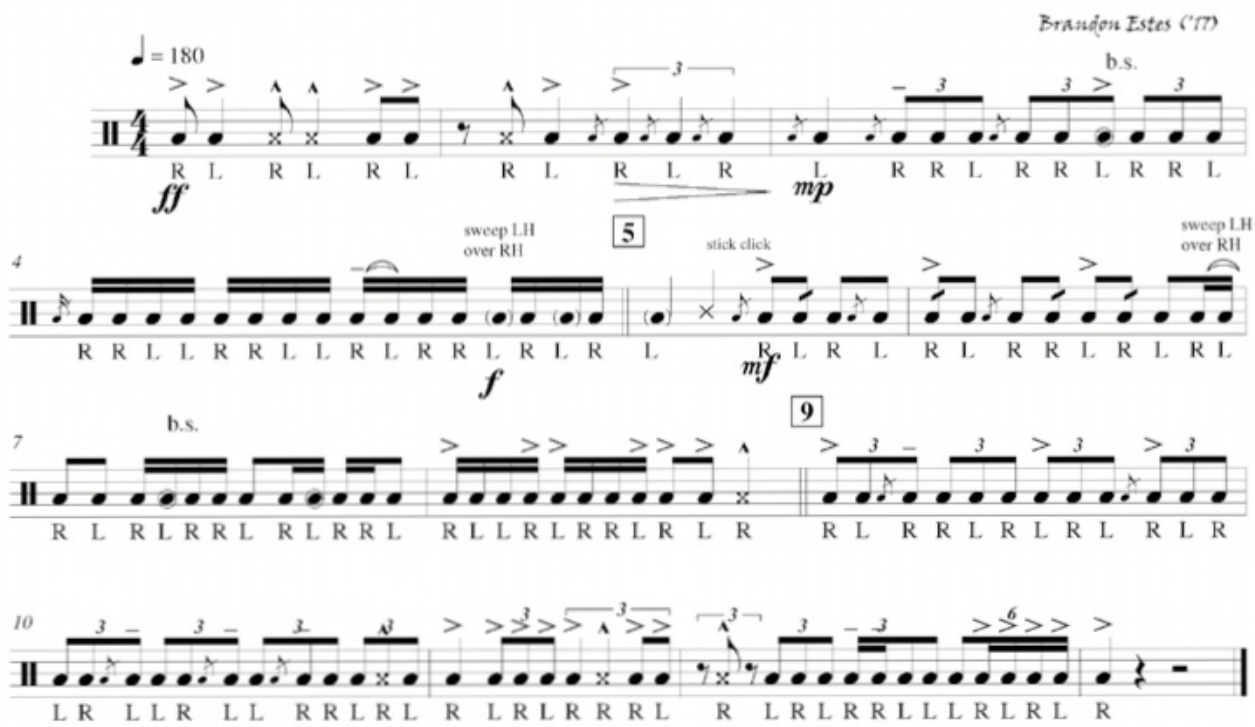
"The Chicago Bears Drumline has had the wonderful privilege to collaborate with the Chicago Bulls Drumline, both at home at Soldier Field in front of a Chicago Bears crowd as well as at the United Center in front of a Chicago Bulls crowd. In addition, the Chicago Bears Drumline has collaborated in a 'Drum Battle' with the Baltimore Ravens Drumline at the 2018 NFL Hall of Fame Game. If the opportunity were to present itself, we would love the opportunity to collaborate in performance with any of our NFC North Drumlines from Minnesota, Green Bay or Detroit!"

What does a typical game day entail for you?

This schedule is pre-COVID
7:30am Report to Soldier Field, equipment, warm-up in locker room
9:00am Sound check
9:30am Tailgating performances begin in multiple locations around the stadium
11:40am On-field pre-game performance
11:45am Drumline forms tunnel for player intros and entrance to the field
12:00pm Kick-off
1st/2nd Quarter Various performance hits inside of stadium
Halftime Performance at one of the fan zones inside of Soldier Field

COFFEE BREAK CHALLENGE

CBDL SNARE AUDITION



For Brandon's video go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

CHICAGO BEARS DRUMLINE KIT:

YAMAHA DRUMS
9300 SFZ Series marching snares (14"), chrome hardware
8300 Field-Corps Series tenors (6", 10", 12", 13", 14")
8300 Field-Corps Series bass drums (18", 20", 24", 28", 32")

ZILDJIAN CYMBALS
18" Stadium Series crash
12" A Special Recording hi-hats
6" Large Zil-Bel
12", 14", 16" Oriental China Trash

PROMARK STICKS
DC8 Jeff Ausdemore & Tim Fairbanks FireGrain sticks
TS7 tenor sticks
Performer Series 1-5 mallets

EVANS DRUMHEADS
14" Hybrid White (top side)
14" MX5 (snare side)
Quads - Corps Clear
Bass drums - MX1 single-ply
Custom Graphic

Image: Courtesy of Yamaha UK (drum shown prior to CBDL wrap)

3rd Quarter 90-second End Zone performance hit during timeout
Post-Game Performance in South West lawn as spectators exit (then, return equipment to storage area, quick meeting)
4:00pm Dismissal

What was your most embarrassing moment in the CBDL?
"We were called up last minute for a time-out performance on the field. As we frantically got set up, I called out the chart that we were to play and proceeded to tap it off, however, I tapped off the wrong tempo (much slower than necessary). Half of the line started playing at that tempo, some just didn't play out of confusion and others played the correct chart at the correct tempo, despite what I tapped off. It took us a few measures, but we regrouped...

"Other embarrassing moments: Stick drops in front of 60,000 fans!"

What has been your most memorable gig?
"In 2011, we were invited to travel to London and perform at the 2011 International Series game (Bears vs. Bucs), as well as the fan rally at Trafalgar Square and the pre-game fan rally at Wembley Stadium."

How has COVID-19 affected your job?
"Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the safety of our fans, we are currently not conducting in-person appearances until further notice. We have had the opportunity to participate in some team events virtually, such as the PNC Bears 5K. However, there are opportunities for virtual performances upon request."

What is the most rewarding part of your job?
"I have the honour and privilege to combine two of my favourite things: drums and football! We maintain our distance from the players and coaches, but every now and then we'll get opportunities to interact with various players. One of our favourites is Charles "Peanut" Tillman!"

Do you have any advice or a quote you'd like to share with us?
"As I stated above, I thought that my rudimental drumming career was over after I aged out. The pro sports drumlines and music ensembles are a reminder that the talents that we have as musicians are still relevant outside of high school and college sports and are very much a part of the professional sports experience. So, my quote is: 'If "it" doesn't exist, imagine "it" and make "it" a reality'. Someone imagined bringing drumlines to the pro sports arena, and now over half of the NFL, NBA and many MLS teams employ drumlines as part of their game day experience! Be creative!"

Next Issue: Brian Calhoun and drumlines with additional needs.

www.chicagobears.com/fan-zone/drumline
chicagobearsdrumline
chicagobearsdrumline

WIN!

A ZILDJIAN 23" K SWEET RIDE CYMBAL

THE SAME MODEL THAT TAYLOR HAWKINS USED ON THE LAST FOO FIGHTERS TOUR
(NOT THE ACTUAL CYMBAL!)

AND A BOX OF HIS SIGNATURE STICKS!

HURRY! COMPETITION CLOSES 12TH APRIL 2021

ZILDJIAN 23" K SWEET RIDE CYMBAL

The choice of our guest editor this issue, the K Sweet Ride takes the traditional K sound and brings it in an alternative direction with fresh tonal colours.

TAYLOR HAWKINS ARTIST SERIES DRUMSTICKS

The drive behind the Foo Fighters, this stick is powered up front as a 5B-style with extra weight and throw. Fashioned from US select hickory, it is an excellent stick for rock but balanced for any style of music.

HOW TO ENTER

Answer the following question and email it to info@beatsnetwork.co.uk

What is the title of the Foo Fighters' new album?

By taking part, entrants agree to be bound by the competition Terms & Conditions.

Terms & Conditions

Entrants must be aged 18 or over. 2. Entries close 11.59pm GMT on 12 April 2021. 3. Prize is as stated and is non-transferable and non-refundable. 4. There is no cash alternative. 5. Only one entry per person. 6. There will be one winner. 8. Winner will be notified by email 14 days after the competition closes. For full terms and conditions email info@beatsnetwork.co.uk Promoter: Beats Network Limited, 34 Westway, Caterham, Surrey, England, CR3 5TP

Our guest editor talks all things Foo and *Medicine At Midnight* with The Darkness's Rufus Taylor

Taylor

Images: Joby Sessions

"Rufus has always been like my little brother – even though he is much taller than me now! – and I'm so proud that I've been able to play a part in his musical journey. I remember sitting him on my drum riser when he was about 12 – when the Foo Fighters headlined Reading for the first time in 2002 – and it was like we'd come full circle when we headlined again in 2012 and were able to invite Rufus to join us on stage to play drums on 'Tie Your Mother Down', while I took over vocals.

"Like his dad, Roger Taylor from Queen, Rufus has a real presence on the drums – you know he's there, and he's doing so much more than just keeping time. He plays for the song, and there's stuff he can do now that I can't – but he has the benefit of youth on his side!

"I'm so happy that he has found his home in The Darkness, and to see him develop as a musician in his own right and play such a big part in how that band writes and makes music is awesome. Like all of the drummers I have chosen to interview for *Rhythm*, Rufus has put the work in, and he understands that, ultimately, that is the cornerstone for any successful musician. I couldn't be prouder, and I thought it would be fun to get him to ask the questions this time as we chat about all things Foo and our new record, *Medicine At Midnight*..."

HAWKINS

Rufus Taylor: "Congratulations on the new record, *Medicine At Midnight* – it's certainly a very different direction for you guys to be taking."

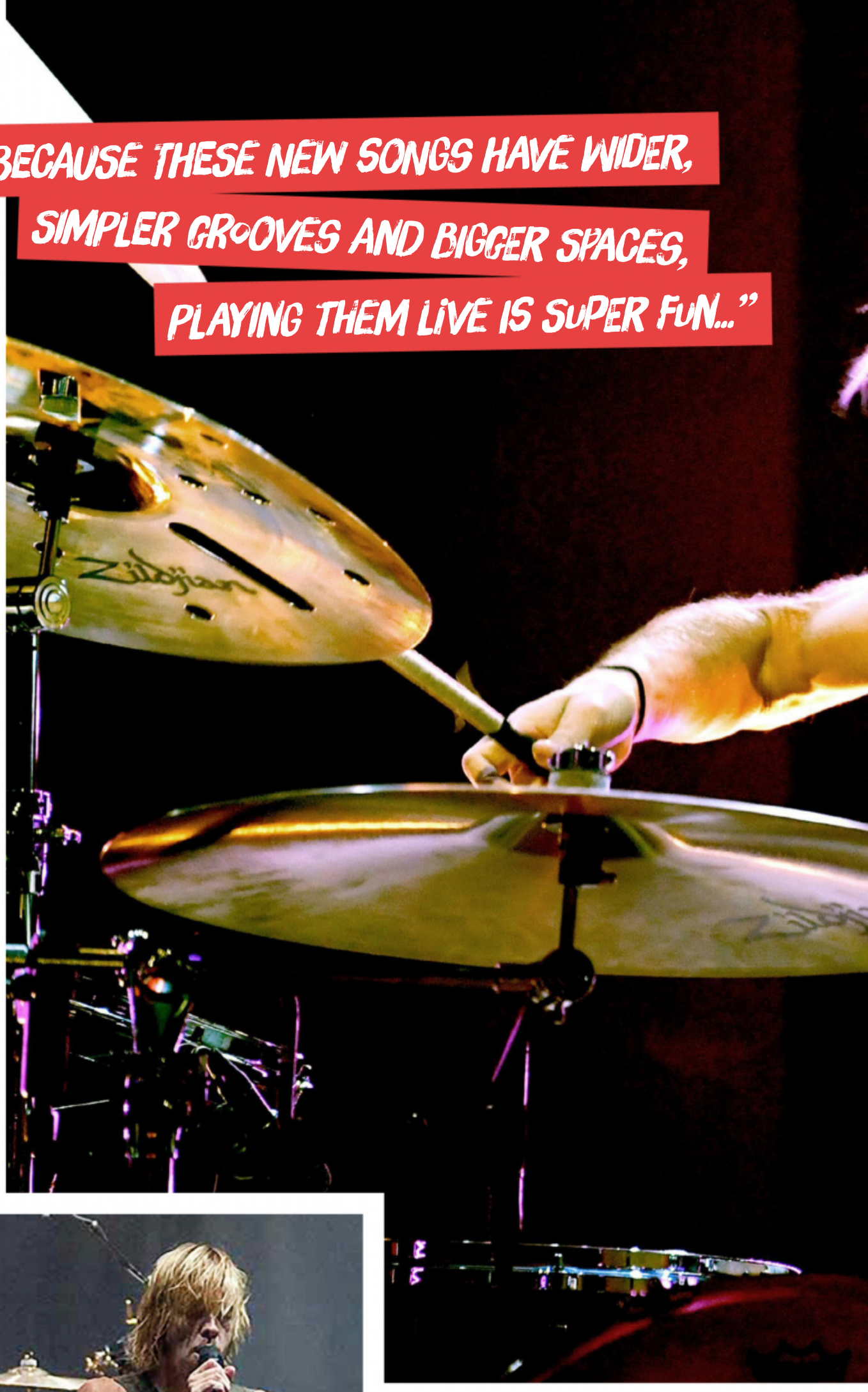
Taylor Hawkins: "It is. It's very digital and super tight, and we have done stuff on this record that I *never* thought we'd do... But Dave wanted to take things a certain way, and when your songwriter has something in mind, my job as his drummer is to help him get to where he wants to go. And if I can add something in the interim, then that's great.

"We've used drum loops and really utilised the female voices here, so I guess my pride was a little bit hurt that I wasn't doing my usual thing this time, and I had concerns that the whole record might sound too perfect. But it doesn't, and once I had got over my drum ego and was out the other side of the recording process, I could see that what we have is an awesome, really fun record."

R: "How did the songs all take shape?"

T: "They came in different ways, shapes and sizes... Dave had about half the album completely mapped out before we started and had demos done for the more groovy-type tracks like 'Making A Fire', 'Shame Shame' and 'Medicine At Midnight'. What worked really well is that we didn't actually do any pre-production, and I think Dave did that on purpose to keep things fresh – as soon as we knew what we were doing on a track we went in and cut it. Actually, one of the biggest lessons I have learned doing this record is that you can overbake things, which we have probably been guilty of in the past sometimes."

"BECAUSE THESE NEW SONGS HAVE WIDER, SIMPLER GROOVES AND BIGGER SPACES, PLAYING THEM LIVE IS SUPER FUN..."



Rufus in action with the Foo Fighters at Leeds Festival, 2012

Image: Tony Woolliscroft

R: "You've talked previously about your insecurity in the studio and 'red light fever' – so how was the recording process for you on this one?"

T: "Making a Foo Fighters record is always going to be a stressful experience for me – I put a lot of pressure on myself because I want to do everything well. Learning to play to a click track came late in life for me, so the studio hasn't always been the most comfortable of places. Over the years, Dave has helped me enormously with my time and the art of making songs, but it's still hard sometimes to have the mighty Mr Grohl in the room with you every time you do a take... especially when you know he could easily do everything himself!"

Image: Kevin Winter/Getty Images

R: "What was your reaction when you first found out that *Medicine At Midnight* was going to be so digitally driven, and that you were going to be doing drum loops?"

T: "I remember speaking to your dad shortly after I found out, and he reminded me about the loops on Queen's 'Another One Bites The Dust' and his first solo album, *Fun In Space*. I was averse to doing them to begin with, because as a drummer, it goes against everything that I believe in. But when we took a bar that I'd just played and looped it for 'Shame Shame', it was actually pretty cool, and I just had to get over myself, accept the fact that we were talking a different direction and go with it. And even though I'm not doing a lot of drum fills on this record, I do like to think that there are still a few '*Rhythm* magazine' moments in there, too!"

R: "I can see why it was hard to accept, as you've always talked so fondly about recording to tape..."

T: "I have always loved making records on tape, especially *Wasting Light* with Butch Vig – that whole creative experience was amazing. I've just never liked the trickery of Pro Tools and computers. Yes, I appreciate that it makes things quick and easy, and it's awesome that you can make ▷

yourself sound great – but for me, the danger is that you lose the personality and character of the drummer, and I have always loved players who have their own unique sound and voice on their instrument."

R: "You're already playing some of these new songs live... How's that been going?"
T: "We have been performing in our studio for different TV shows around the world, and even though it's obviously not the same, it feels great to have some forward motion in these strange times. We all feel so fortunate to be able to play and still operate as a band – with the help of a lot of COVID testing, of course! It will be great to get back to playing proper gigs as soon as it's safe to do so."

R: "These news tracks have a very different vibe and feel, and the extra space in the songs is certainly going to give your live sets a different place to go. I'm very happy to still hear some of those classic Foo middle-eights in there, though!"
T: "I have to say that I am having an absolute ball playing these new songs... There is never normally this much space – usually, I am working my ass off from the first second to the last on tracks like 'Monkey Wrech' which just don't let up. But as these new songs have wider, simpler grooves and bigger spaces, playing them live is super fun because I can sit back and really concentrate on my time. It's just a different way of thinking for us, and this new collection of tracks is fun, breezy and short – you're all done in 35 minutes!"

R: "One of the things I've always found inspiring about you is your constant pursuit of music outside of your day job. With your projects like The Coattail Riders and Nighttime Boogie Association, your home studio really does seem to be taking on a life of its own..."
T: "I'm so lucky to be able to have such a great studio at my house, and it's amazing how it has developed – the feel of it and the drum sound are totally rad. Over the

MEDICINE AT MIDNIGHT TRACK BY TRACK

'MAKING A FIRE'
"With the gospel-type feel and wider groove on this track, I was able to sit right back in the space and have the time to really think about where my kick and snare were landing. This is great to play live!"

'SHAME SHAME'
"We set up a really small kit in the stairwell for this one – a bit like Zeppelin's concept on 'When The Levee Breaks', which was done at Headley Grange. Being sat in the middle of a giant hallway meant I needed to keep things simple – if I'd played like I was in Rush with that drum sound, you wouldn't hear a thing. This one has a computer loop, and it's a bit of an oddball track – but it's kind of cool, and now I'm playing it live, I can grab a cymbal here and there and do some extra little things, which is great."

'CLOUDSPOTTER'
"This is the last song that we cut, and we did it in two takes in a tiny room at A&M studios, not in the house where most of the album was recorded. I didn't have a demo, but there are no drum fills in it – it's those that usually complicate the process – and we knew exactly what we wanted. I'm playing a very small kit, covered with a bunch of duct tape and just a couple of cymbals – hats, ride and crash. I love how 'thuddy' the snare is, and the kick has a killer punch. I was basically playing in a closet, really digging in and getting every one of those eighth notes out. It's almost robotic, but the kick drum is still swinging – it's another awesome song to play live."

'WAITING ON A WAR'
"Dave and I figured this one out together, and it definitely feels more like a traditional Foo Fighters' track, but the drums are only on the last 45 seconds. It was really easy to put down, and it's us doing our crazy Foo thing and going bananas at the end... This track is definitely lined up and ready for a stadium show."

'MEDICINE AT MIDNIGHT'
"This is Dave's tribute to David Bowie's 'Let's Dance', and my little tribute to Omar Hakim who played on it. Omar actually did all the percussion for us on this record, too, and he is such a fun, cool, positive guy to be around. My favourite Sting solo record, *Dream Of The Blue Turtles* also features him on drums."

'NO SON OF MINE'
"I had a really hard time tracking this song, because in my head – when Dave played me the demo – I thought it had more kick drum beats than it actually did. So, when I went in to play it, I had to economise what I was doing, and it totally threw my groove off. It was as simple as one different little kick drum pattern, but my brain wasn't having it! I'm still struggling with it a bit now to be honest, but I love it, and it's a kick-ass song to play live."

'HOLDING POISON'
"The beginning of this is more like a regular Foo Fighters' track with the angular riff thing that we get into sometimes, but then it turns into *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*! It's one of the more epic songs on the record, and I really like the fact that it goes a lot of different places in a relatively short space of time."

'CHASING BIRDS'
"This is another track that Dave had completely finished and I only played it twice. The second time, I was still kind of learning it – and I think you can hear that – but Greg [Kurstin, Producer] really liked it, so I got to go home early that day! I think the vibe of making things up right then and there is cool – almost like a songwriter who only plays drums every once in a while would. We had T-shirts on the snare to muffle it down – a bit like that famous 'dead' Trident Studios drum sound."

'LOVE DIES YOUNG'
"The beginning reminds me a bit of 'Keep Yourself Alive' by Queen, and it's also got a bit of a disco vibe. We were struggling to find the right groove for this one – Dave did have a drum part in mind, but we couldn't make it work, and I wanted to try something different. I was thinking about Ronnie Vannucci Jr from The Killers, a beautiful drummer, Larry Mullen from U2 on *Unforgettable Fire* and Phil Gould with Level 42, who I am totally vibing here!"

Image: Andrew Stuart

TAYLOR'S KIT

GRETSCH DRUMS, ZILDJIAN CYMBALS, ZILDJIAN ARTIST SERIES DRUMSTICKS, REMO DRUMHEADS, LP PERCUSSION

years, I've filled the space with all sorts of posters, memorabilia and instruments that pay homage to my favourite bands and drummers, so it has a really cool vibe when you walk in. To be able to make my own music there with incredible musicians that I grew up admiring is awesome.

"The Coattail Riders actually started out as a fun little cover band, and it was great to put out our third record, *Get The Money*, in 2019 – and Matt [Cameron] and I can't wait to do more with Nighttime Boogie Association when we're able to."

R: "Let's go right back to the beginning. Tell me about getting the gig with the Foos..."

T: "I loved the first Foo Fighters' record, *Foo Fighters*, and the fact that one guy was responsible for everything was really inspiring – but I'd never met Dave, and I was scared to because I felt like a dork. Don't get me wrong, Alanis's [Morissette] music was amazing and great – she's an incredible songwriter – but those guys all came from a punk rock background, and I was just this drummer-for-hire kid playing in, essentially, a pop act. I had a chip on my shoulder that I wasn't as cool as they were, but Dave came over to me one time when we were all at a thing in LA and said something really kind about my drumming."

R: "He might be Dave Grohl, but he still goes out of his way to compliment the drummers and bands he likes..."

T: "He really is the most affable dude on the planet, and that day we first talked he gave me time. From then on we kept meeting at festivals, and I remember Alanis asking me straight out on a flight to Australia once what I was going to do when Dave invited me to join Foo Fighters... At the time I never ▷

thought that would ever happen, and like any drummer with a paying gig, I told her I'd never leave her. Of course, the second I got the call, I was out of there!"

R: "But that gig with Alanis was the making of you?"
T: "Seriously, that year with Alanis was the most amazing year of my life, and I definitely wouldn't be here without her. She was awesome, and I really do owe her everything. She was so open to my playing and let me do whatever I wanted, and in the process I learned so much. My dream, though, was always to play drums in a hard rock band, and when I heard the Foo Fighters were looking for a drummer, I rang Dave."

R: "Was there ever any friendly competition playing-wise between the two of you when you first joined, or has it always just been a mutual appreciation society?
T: "Certainly not for him, because he's Dave Grohl! He always likes to sit down and have a tap, and every time he does, you almost want to pack up and go home because he's so good... I came from Alanis's band where I was the only, and best, drummer, and I had to drop that ego pretty quickly when I joined the Foo Fighters and accept the fact that I was now the *second*-best drummer in the room!"

Image: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images

R: "I still can't fathom out those triplets he does..."
T: "Well, Dave has his style, and all the songs he recorded before I joined I will never be able play the way he did – like 'Everlong', 'Monkey Wrench' and 'This Is A Call'. That's his sound, his feel and his thing, so I have to make it my own.

"To be honest, I have always seen Dave as the tier ahead of me – in the same way that I do Matt Cameron and Stephen Perkins. I learned so much from all of them, especially Dave, because at least half of what I know musically has come from watching him work. I just take it all in when he's in the studio laying down a drum track or making a demo all by himself in 45 minutes... Really, it's thanks to him that I can record a record all by myself now.

"There are a few things that I do that he doesn't – like press rolls, because he says he doesn't know how to do them – but you're right, those single-stroke triplets of his are so strong and fast."

R: "Both of you are self-taught?"
T: "Neither of us had lessons, and it's funny, because meeting Dave was literally like meeting my older brother. That's always been the relationship we've had, and you are never going to be better than your older brother – he's always going to be the one to show you how to do cool stuff. You accept that, and you love it.

"My older brother, Jason, taught me how to play baseball and defend myself, and Dave has taught me how to be a complete musician and how to actually play a song. Not just how to play drums, but how to play a song and what feel really is, how to layer vocals and what time really means... Over the years we've used a lot of clicks in the studio, so your time is ready made, and learning to play with the click was a whole other challenge for me. When we play live, we don't use any backing tracks – none of that stuff – so every night it's a little faster, or a little slower, depending on the crowd reaction."

R: "If I have learnt anything from the bands that I love, it's that they know how to put on a show. You guys put everything you have into every single gig that you play."
T: "You have to be a real fan to get through a three-hour Foo Fighters show! Seriously though, I honestly think the reason we still play so long is that we still have that

kind of underdog spirit that we don't really deserve to be playing the stadiums we do. That's why we try to give everything that we have, because we genuinely feel so lucky to be there. It's a shared experience with the crowd, and I do think it's a work ethic."

R: "How would you describe your role when you play live?"
T: "As a drummer, you are constantly driving the bus, making sure everyone has got a comfortable seat and gets there safely – and if you feel like you're not doing it well, then it's going to be a bumpy ride for everyone. That's the best way I can put it. You are trying to give everyone the smoothest ride possible, but also throw some tasty licks in there as well of course!

"Even though I am always reacting to everything that is going on around me when we play live, one thing that Dave always told me – and it's great advice for any drummer – is to always be aware of where your snare drum, the backbeat, is landing. That's rock 'n' roll, and that backbeat is unstoppable. It's why Charlie Watts is amazing. I didn't get him when I was a kid, but I do now, and he's literally got one of the greatest backbeats of all time."

R: "I remember the first time I saw you play, when Foo Fighters headlined Reading in 2002. I have to admit that I was actually there to see Sum 41 and Blink 182 – I was really into Steve Jocz and Travis Barker at the time. Dad told me that you were one of the most beautiful players in the world to watch, because your playing is so fluid and natural, and all day he just kept telling me to wait until you got up there. Of course when you did, I was blown away, and in this crazy line of 'Taylors influencing Taylors', you've become one of my biggest influences..."
T: "Well, I'll take that compliment from your dad to my grave – love you, Rog! I think everyone knows by now that he was my first drum hero. He always looked so cool – he had such flair when he played – and those big, wide-open drums and giant cymbals sounded like an orchestra pit with those added splashes of colour from his timbales, rototoms and china. His drum fills were so melodic and he's telling a story with those high and low-pitched 'coloured' notes.

"When we played Reading that time, we went on right after Muse, and they were just on the cusp of exploding. I remember your dad coming back and telling me how good they were and getting mad at him – the last thing you want to hear right before you go and play a big show like that is how great the previous band were... Most people won't admit it of course, but it's a competition – every time!"

Image: Kevin Winter/Getty Images

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MATT CAMERON

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

MATT CAMERON

UP CLOSE WITH THE SOUNDGARDEN & PEARL JAM STICKSMAN

"The first time I heard Matt Cameron play was on Soundgarden's *Flower* EP," says Taylor. "I was immediately struck by the military precision of the drumming and the marching snare intro that leads into that badass riff... It just got me.

"I quickly found *Ultramega OK*, and that's when I started discovering more about Matt as a drummer and Soundgarden as a band... They were soon part of my favourite little group of cassettes – along with Jane's Addiction and the Chili Peppers.

"When Soundgarden's first major record release – *Louder Than Love* – came out in 1989, that's when you could really hear the drums properly, and Matt became one of my favourite drummers at that time.

"What is it about his playing that I love? His discipline, power, technique and that awesome precision – it's all about those hands! He's a songwriter, too, and – this goes back to me also being inspired by Roger Taylor – I think that drummers are always better players when they go past just the drumming.

"For me, one of the best things about becoming a professional musician has been getting to meet – and sometimes work with – people that I admired coming up. And one of the greatest gifts I've had is collaborating with Matt on our own little project, Nighttime Boogie Association. I'm so lucky that I got to enjoy his playing from afar and have him as an inspiration when I was starting out...and now we're friends, and I get to talk to him for *Rhythm*. It's a beautiful thing."

Image: Rob Shanahan

Image: KevinMazur/Getty Images

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

Taylor: “Who were your early musical influences?”

Matt: “The music that really stood out for me growing up was Jimi Hendrix, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin and Queen. Roger Taylor and Ian Paice were both big influences, and as a kid I always considered myself someone who loved rock music. Around the age of 17, though, I discovered jazz and heard drummers like Elvin Jones, Tony Williams and Roy Haynes for the first time... Those seminal records put me in a completely different mindset, and I took lessons, studied really hard, worked on my hands and played jazz gigs. I didn’t even listen to rock for ages, but eventually, I went back to doing what I was good at – playing in rock bands.”

T: “What was your drumming like before you delved into that jazz world?”

M: “It was definitely influenced by Kiss and all the other things I was listening to on the radio at the time. My style was pretty basic – my teenage years were spent surfing and doing motocross, so drumming was just another one of those fun activities.

“I started playing gigs with local cover bands when I was around 15 and was also in the high school jazz band, so from a fairly early age I’d say that everything came quite naturally for me. I just loved the work aspect of it all – practising, rehearsing, playing gigs – and it began to feel like something I could pursue. I knew it would take a lot of work, but it was a real benefit to have established those parameters so early on in my career.”

T: “That serious work ethic seems to be a common thread, and I’m sure that was the case even when you first got together with Soundgarden...”

M: “By the time I joined those guys in 1986, I had played in a lot of different bands and I could offer them that experience. I was immediately impressed at how protective Chris (Cornell, guitar and vocals), Kim (Thayil, lead guitar) and Hiro (Yamamoto, bass) were about their original music, and I wanted to help them get their sound. But I also realised from the start that it was going to be something I could claim as my own as well, and that sense of belonging was such a cool feeling – not one I’d ever had in a band before.”

T: “You knew you were home...”

M: “I did, right after the audition. Chris was so into what I brought to the table because it was different to what he, Kim or Hiro could come up with. We were four songwriters, with four separate identities, who just happened to be in a band together – and it worked. I got the vibe from the moment I joined. It was good from Day One.”

MATT’S KIT

YAMAHA DRUMS, ZILDJIAN CYMBALS, KEPLINGER SNARE DRUMS, VIC FIRTH SIGNATURE SERIES STICKS, REMO DRUMHEADS

Image: Rob Shanahan

▷ **T: "Of course it was good – Matt Cameron is in your band now! But, seriously, what has always stood out for me when I think about your drumming is the precision of your fills, your technique, your power... You play for the song, and your drumming is so tasteful, but those hands of yours are the best in the business – and Dave Grohl, Chad Smith and countless others would agree with me. Out of all the drummers that made their mark in that grunge era – or whatever we want to call it – for me, you are the Neil Peart of that time. Or the Buddy Rich... It's all about those hands."**
M: "Buddy was actually a huge influence on me, too, and it's because of him that I started on snare drum when I was taking lessons. I took that time to get my hands fully figured out, and then I transferred that over to the kit – it was a big part of my early training for sure."

T: "Not mine - I had my drum kit set up in front of the mirror from the off!"
M: "But I will always remember the first time I saw you with Alanis [Morissette] on MTV – you were so fun to watch! We were all aware of that record *Jagged Little Pill*, and you really stood out in that band. I always wish I could be more of a showman, and I love watching entertainers like you, Chad and Dave."

T: "Well, I think you are just as much fun to watch. You have the best posture – like Bill Bruford – and you do everything the proper way, even though there is nothing proper about Soundgarden songs whatsoever! You can see and hear the schooling you have had, but you still play the most electrifying, off-the-grid, insane music. Soundgarden were one of the only bands that could bring those odd times and that punk rock feel together, and I'm sure a lot of that is down to you, because you were able to make it still feel crusty in a good way. As Chad Smith once told me, one of the greatest things about your drumming is that you can make odd time feel so comfortable that we almost don't realise you are doing it. How do you do that?"
M: "Bill Bruford with King Crimson was another huge influence, and I also listened to a lot of Terry Bozzio with Frank Zappa and stuff like that. I did work on a lot of odd time stuff with my drum teacher, Jon Szanto, but I think I was lucky enough to also have a natural ability to understand it.

"How it worked with Soundgarden is that Kim, Hiro and Chris would write these weird riffs that weren't in 4/4. They didn't know that it was non-4/4 music, though, and I was able to navigate that stuff with them. Rather than approach it from an odd time signature perspective, I always thought of the music as a song first and foremost, and where I could naturally land my snare and kick to fit the guitar riff or vocal. It was never mechanical with us – it was more a feeling that we all had when we played together. One thing that I always loved about Soundgarden is that we used a lot of riffs in 6/4 and 3/4 that sound like 4/4, but there are those extra two beats..."

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

Image: Ross Halfin

Image: Michael Hurcomb/Getty Images

T: "A playing over the bar kind of thing?"
M: "Yeah, but the other guys didn't see it as odd or different – it was just how they naturally wrote music. When I started writing myself, that had a big influence on me, and I gravitated towards stuff that wasn't normal rock 'n' rock music and songs, too."

T: "So when you joined Pearl Jam you were going into a completely different feel, with a completely different groove... And I know that feeling, because I have had to do it a couple of times. It took me a while to get comfortable with that 'Dave Grohl style' of drumming when I joined the Foo Fighters, as I was coming from all these polyrhythmic, swingy things. All of a sudden it was straight ahead and heavy. How long did it take you to adjust to Pearl Jam, or did you just decide to put 'you' in there?"
M: "It was important for me, personally, not to lose sight of my own relationship with music and my drums, so it was a balance of trying to pay homage to what came before and being myself. There were four drummers in the band before me – Dave Abbruzzese, Dave Krusen, Jack Irons and Matt Chamberlain – so there are all those records that people are emotionally committed to because they sound and feel a certain way."

T: "But you obviously found your place?"
M: "When I first went out with them, it was because they had an emergency situation when Jack Irons couldn't do the tour. I had about two weeks to learn 60 songs, and that was a deep dive! They are really good friends of mine, though – we go way back – and when I joined the band, it was something that I really wanted to do. But I was also mourning the loss of Soundgarden. I never wanted the band to break up because I felt that we had so much more to give. I probably wasn't in the best mindset when I first picked up the gig – the dust hadn't really settled for me – and it actually took a couple of tours for me to wrap my head around the music properly. But once I began to appreciate what a well-oiled machine Pearl Jam is, it felt really good to be part of it. Playing arenas and stadiums was so much more than what I was used to in Soundgarden, and I really appreciated that opportunity. It's been a fantastic gig."

T: "As good as you are, it's hard to fit into other people's shoes. No matter how hard I try, I know that I'm never going to sound like Dave – so I've quit trying!"

M: "But that's what I love about Foo Fighters now – I can tell that you are playing the drums. You are the drummer. Yes, the first couple of records are Dave, but I'll never forget when you came to Seattle when you were making *Sonic Highways*. When you played me that song, you owned the band, and as a musician, I love to hear someone with an individual voice on their instrument. It doesn't happen all that often these days. And I hear your personality within the group shining through on the new record *Medicine At Midnight*, too, and it's really cool.

"Like you, it took me a little while to adjust when I first joined Pearl Jam, because what I did with Soundgarden was distinctly my own thing, and you can hear my personality on the kit and in the music. But the guys in Pearl Jam were so open to me and even let me contribute music to the first album that I made with them. They were super openminded about what I could bring to the party – it just took me a while to figure out exactly what that was."

T: "I get it, man – I had the same thing. I really had to ask myself who I was when I joined the Foo Fighters. I had to step into Dave Grohl's shoes – and he was still there! So how do you approach a new record with Pearl Jam? It's definitely more straight ahead and not as intricate as the Soundgarden stuff..."

M: "When I start working on a new record with them – or on any new project – I just try to stay in the moment and not think about the past or the future."

Image: Kevin Winter/Getty Images

Image: Ross Halfin

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

T: "When you talk about 'being in the moment', it takes me straight back to when we were in the studio at my house recording songs for Nighttime Boogie Association..."
M: "Man, I can't wait to do more of that!"

T: "And we will – as soon as the world opens up again. It's ironic, but one of the songs on our LP – *Long In The Tooth* – is just drum machine with some tom, or rototom overdubs. Not quite what people would expect from us – a band of two drummers, but no real drums! Our second song – 'The Path We're On' – was originally a drum machine, too, but then me and Lou (co-producer John Lousteau), were adamant you should play drums on it. You walked into my drum room, adjusted everything with your hands and ears, and nailed it perfectly in one take with odd time, tons of fills and lots of other amazing stuff. Lou and I were gobsmacked! If I am doing something in odd time, I really have to plan out my fills or it's a mess..."
M: "That was a song I wrote, so I was super familiar with the form of it, and when I work on a piece of music for a long time, I am always thinking about perhaps putting drums on it. So when that situation arises, all I have to do is go in there and just do it, as opposed to doing a session with a chart, which calls for a different approach..."

T: "Oh my God, you can read charts?"
M: "Yeah, I can..."

T: "Well there you go – I can't!"
M: "It was another of the things I worked on when I was taking lessons, and, again, I really dug the challenge of learning all those weird snare drum pieces. I had to play them with my drum teacher, and if the sticking was off, or I was off, I had to start again."

T: "And that's what makes you so distinctive in the world of rock – you can really hear that dedication and hard work in your playing, Matt. I did certainly not do that! I remember sitting behind your riser at the tribute we all did for Chris at The Forum in LA and checking you out! As musicians we love to see the intricacies of how other drummers set up, sit and play..."
M: "When I first got to Seattle, I started working with all these intensely creative and original people who had no formal background with music – which was a benefit, because that type of learned musicianship can get in the way of creativity, originality and personality. What I brought to the table – take my relationship with Chris as an example – was the ability to allow him to write whatever he wanted. My technical training helped a lot with that, but I also always try to make sure that my feel and swing is good, because, sometimes, if all you think about is technique, you can lose sight of what it takes to make the song great. It's a balancing act."

T: "But you really are one of the few drummers that has the chops but can also play rock 'n' roll. Sometimes you don't want to hear drummers that are very schooled play a rock song, because it doesn't have that looseness – or whatever it is that makes rock music feel authentic..."
M: "You can teach kids how to play rock music, but there is also this completely different element that we as rock drummers have to bring to the gig in order for the audience to feel that it is a powerful experience. It's an athletic job, and some of the things I have to do to prepare properly for a three-hour show with Pearl Jam have nothing to do with playing music – physical fitness and the right mental attitude also come into the equation."

T: "Absolutely! It's a physical job, especially as we get older. You have to get yourself stage fit, and for me that means mountain biking and push-ups – I need that muscle density to get through a three-hour Foo Fighter set. Not a lot of people talk about that kind of thing though, because it's not very rock 'n' roll – but it's true!"
M: "It's not cool at all, and it's this whole other mindset about staying in the best physical shape you can so you can do your job properly."

T: "Because if you or I mess up, Matt, we're all dead – everyone is going down! If one of my band's three guitar players makes a mistake – which, of course, they never do! – or if the singer misses a lyric or comes in at the wrong time, you can still keep rolling..."
M: "Absolutely, and a big part of the gig for you and I is to make sure that our singer is comfortable and that they can go in any direction that they want to. I had a lot of experience as a kid playing with choirs and singers who were very particular

Image: Ross Halfin

Image: Ross Halfin

about how they wanted everything. Years of working with singers in that way really helped when I joined Soundgarden and then transitioned into Pearl Jam. What the singer needed became almost instinctual."

T: "I had to do that with Alanis – I played to her."
M: "When your singer is having a good show, it's a good feeling for everyone, and I cherish every moment that I got to have with Chris."

T: "I'm so happy that you guys managed to get back together and had that chance to make a really good record, too..."
M: "It was so fun, and we just picked up where we left off."

T: "Seeing you guys at The Forum that last time was definitely one of my favourite Soundgarden shows, ever. I loved that you were always a punk rock band when you got on stage, but that show was somehow just more grounded, more cohesive. You were so on it, and you really knew how to put on an arena rock show. Dave and I went together, and he had so much fun in the front row, banging his head the whole time – he was so happy! I was up by the soundboard, of course, because I wanted to see and hear everything properly. I remember thinking that it was like a Queen concert!"

M: "When we got back together in 2010, we started with a couple of club shows in Seattle and they were super fun, sweaty and small. It was great to get back to the clubs, but Chris had done a lot of solo shows and arenas with Audioslave, and I had been doing the same with Pearl Jam. Performing experience at that level meant that both he and I were able to bring so much back to the band, and, as you know, there's a very different element to performing when you are playing those big rooms and stadiums. It's a whole different mindset, and it just comes with practice.

"One thing we did figure out on that last tour is how much we appreciated the music that we had written together. We really did put so much into every song, and I think that really came out when we started performing our music live again."

T: "I know it makes me sound like a dinosaur, but it's hard to see where rock music is headed these days... One guy I do really like, though, is Ty Segall. He's a great drummer, a great musician and a great artist – and he's bringing psychedelic, organic rock music back to the kids..."

M: "That guy is amazing, and I actually just got the new Fuzz album. I like stuff to stand out and sound different, and Ty Segall is a good example of that – you can hear his personality, and you can tell that he is fully committed to his sound and his songwriting."

T: "Thank God! Rock music needs more than just us old guys!"
M: "Music is a continuum, and I hope that what you and I – and Chad, Dave and all our peers – what we have brought to the world of music, can inspire the next generation. It makes me proud to think that we are able to do that, and I love to see young musicians playing their instruments and writing their own songs.

"You and I are both songwriters, and I hope that young drummers will also be inspired to do more than just sit behind the kit when they hear the awesome solo records that you are making, or see that I wrote songs in Soundgarden..."

T: "I hope that we are showing them that they don't just have to be the drummer."
M: "All they have to do is just get out there and do it..."

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TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

ROGER TAYLOR

QUEEN MAN TALKS INFLUENCES & INSPIRATION

Images: Lola Leng Taylor

“Like all my favourite drummers, Roger Taylor has a truly individual style, feel and sound,” Taylor says. “You only have to hear that hi-hat open up every time he hits the snare to know that it’s him. It’s all about that feel and that big drum sound, which was such an important part of Queen’s heaviness. Not only is he an incredibly versatile drummer, the fact that Roger is also a songwriter means that his fills are very musical – almost orchestral – and he makes every one of them count...

“My first-ever concert was Queen, and somehow my parents managed to get me down to the front when Freddie was throwing out flowers. I will never forget watching Roger play ‘We Will Rock You’ and ‘We Are The Champions’. He was so visual, so theatrical, so cool – the ultimate in rock ’n’ roll – and he became one of my biggest influences. I literally learnt to play drums to the *Live Killers* record, but do you know what? I still don’t know how Roger played that drum solo on ‘Keep Yourself Alive’ when he completely turns the beat around!

“When I found Roger’s album *Fun In Space* – to this day a favourite of mine – I couldn’t believe that one guy was responsible for everything. By then I knew that I wanted to play drums in a rock ‘n’ roll band, but it was Roger that inspired me to think about being more than just a drummer, and to have the confidence to start writing songs and making my own records.

“My goal when I became a professional musician was to meet Roger, and these days, I’m lucky enough to be able to call him a friend. It blows my mind that we have shared stages together and that he has contributed drums – and that incredible voice of his – to some of my solo records. I couldn’t resist dragging him into this special issue of *Rhythm* to share some of his own early memories, and those all-important influences and inspirations.

“So, without further ado, Rog, it’s over to you...”

ROGER TAYLOR, IN HIS OWN WORDS...

Well, my first instrument was actually a ukulele – which I couldn't even play! Drums came along when I was about 12, and I just found that it was something I could do – it came very naturally. I knew that I wanted to be a drummer after hearing 'Rock Around The Clock' by Bill Haley & His Comets, and soon after that I discovered Little Richard... Well, you just can't beat that, can you?

"In the very early days, I remember playing along to Roy Orbison songs on my mum's saucepans with a big pair of her wooden knitting needles – that was my first kit! My parents were supportive of my new-found hobby, and with the help of my Dad, I eventually ended up accumulating a drum set – scraping it together piece by piece. It was very cheap and only had one tiny cymbal – a little second-hand 8" Avedis Zildjian splash. I had saved up for ages to buy that cymbal, and it cost me eight quid! It was my only cymbal for a long time, and I learnt very quickly with only an 8" up there. I even used the bell as a ride, and I had to develop a good touch to pull that off!

"When I was a kid, nobody just went out and bought a full kit like they do today – you got one drum or cymbal at a time, which was actually incredibly good training because you learnt exactly how each individual component worked, what it was for and how to get the best out of it. I'm a firm believer in using every bit of your kit – even those bits that you don't immediately think about playing, like the rims.

"I started out playing in bands, and it was fantastic experience because you were learning so much in the process without even realising it. We'd play in pubs, clubs, town halls and nightclubs – doing all sorts of covers – and we'd also take requests from the audience, which meant we had to be able to turn on a sixpence. We made peanuts, but at least it was a bit of pocket money!

"It's very flattering when people say that I have my own sound and style, but I think you either have the time in you or you don't, and I just seemed to have the knack and the right kind of wrists. And your wrists are so important, because that's where the snap comes from. I did teach myself,

Image: Michael Putland/Getty Images

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

Image: Tony Woolliscroft

really just by learning the licks from my favourite records. And from the pot, where all of that got mixed up, I just forged my own style.

"I loved the jazz drummers because of their beautiful fluidity, and Mitch Mitchell was one of my favourites – the way he blended those jazz and rock rhythms was sublime. I first got turned on to him after going to see Jimi Hendrix live, and I was blown away by his playing. He was such an expressive and inventive drummer – everything was tight and flowed so perfectly – and he always played for the song.

"His fills were just fantastic, and he was so fast with those jazz chops that you barely saw his hands. 'Fire' and 'Manic Depression' – from The Jimi Hendrix Experience *Are You Experienced* – are still two of my favourite drum tracks. Those songs are so hard to play, and, of course, Mitch was a traditional grip guy – which is not going to work for drummers like Taylor and me. I like the way it looks, but I just can't get the power.

"Later on, I went back and found out about other drummers, like Gene Krupa – such a showman – and Louie Bellson, who was just phenomenal. I really don't know how Louie did some of that stuff, and, of course, he was one of the first with two bass drums. Buddy Rich? Well, he was technically frightening, but he did make me realise that the double stroke stuff is quite important, and I actually enjoyed the process of improving that part of my playing – even though I found it very hard to make them loud!

"Another drummer that also blew me away when Freddie [Mercury] and I first saw Zeppelin play live was John Bonham.

Above: Roger in action with the Foo Fighters, 2015, Milton Keynes, UK.

He walked on, tuned up, started playing... and he sounded like thunder! He was pure rock – he had speed, power and wonderful technique – and he was doing all this fancy bass drum stuff that nobody else could do. Then there was his drum sound – massive and natural, big but controlled – that became the benchmark that so many drummers strived for. He hit hard, but he knew how to hit right, and he had the best bass drum sound, ever. Just look how much 'When The Levee Breaks' has been sampled...

"I loved his drumming, and that big sound of his was a huge influence on me. It's why I was never really happy with the drums on our first album, *Queen*. They sounded dead. At that time, though, deadening and tape were very fashionable – especially at Trident Studios where we recorded in that famous drum booth. That sound is good for certain things, but it's not what I wanted.

"Drums are a tuneable instrument, and they are meant to have a note, and I was much happier with the more natural, open sound on our second and third albums – *Queen II* and *Sheer Heart Attack*. Dynamics are also such an important part of the sound. Hit too hard and you'll smother the drum – you just won't get the tone out of it.

"Keith Moon was another big influence on me. He was just phenomenal at what he did, and he was another drummer with a great sound. Those tympanic toms were quite revolutionary, and his phrasing was just so natural, untutored and brilliant. I also loved the guys from The Shadows – Tony Meehan and Brian Bennett. They were wonderful drummers and don't always get the recognition they deserve. Brian also had the most beautiful Ludwig Silver Sparkle, and I dreamt of owning a kit like that!

"As drummers, we drive the band, and I think the most important thing that we can all do is play for the song. It's not about showing off on your instrument; it's about being aware of the whole song – not just the drum part – and how the drums are going to fit in as a whole.

"I learnt very quickly when I went into a studio what a set of drums could bring to a song, and I like to think that the drums on our records added to the overall sound, and that they were not just part of the noise that keeps time..."

LEVEL 42'S GROOVEMEISTER ON POCKET, CLICKS AND TIME

PHIL GOULD

Image: Richard Ecclestone/Getty Images

"Phil Gould's drumming is in my DNA – every time I sit down at the kit he's in there somewhere. His playing with Level 42 made such a big impression on me when I was younger – it's so great but so understated, and he has this crazy pocket...

"Back then, of course, I didn't even know what pocket meant, but I do now - I even try to find mine sometimes! Seriously though, Phil is *the* pocket drummer. Groove is his thing, but he also has incredible chops that he lets out every once in a while and just blows you away...

"Like so many of my favourite drummers, he's also a songwriter and lyricist, and it's great to see him releasing a new solo album this year, *Beautiful Wounds*, which features a plethora of his musician friends from around the world, and a very special final performance from his brother, Boon, who sadly passed away in 2019."

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

Taylor Hawkins: "So, Phil, what's it like to be on a constant search for the perfect pocket?"
Phil Gould: "Absolute torture to be honest, because I beat myself up if I am slightly ahead or behind! I think it's because I am slightly OCD... I love repetition, so if I am a little bit out, it makes me feel very uneasy or, in extreme cases, physically sick!"

T: "I can't watch myself live sometimes because I've rushed so badly, but at least I don't drag! How did you develop your time and that incredible internal clock of yours?"
P: "I grew up on the Isle of Wight, and in my late teens I played in covers bands or at the holiday camps throughout the summer. That whole experience was a great start to my musical education, and the money I made in the summers enabled me to study through the winters, and I ended up at the Royal Academy of Music in London studying percussion. It was while I was there that I got offered a session with Robin Scott for M's 'Pop Muzik', and he then asked if I wanted to record the album with him at Queen's studio in Montreux..."

T: "Wow, you recorded at Mountain Studios! How was that?"
P: "It was my first proper session, and it turned out to be another huge learning experience for me. I formed a really strong musical connection with Wally Badarou – the keyboard genius Robin had hired and who later became part of Level 42 – and I was so excited about the prospect of recording a whole album. When I turned up on the first day, though, Robin told me that we were going to start by laying down snare and kick to click, and that they'd need me to do about 10 minutes of that on each track.

"I had a mini meltdown at that point and told them in no uncertain terms that I could play the whole thing. Robin gave me an ultimatum – stay in Montreux for the summer and record his way or go home to my flat in Clapham! So I swallowed my pride and stayed. I did the whole of that album to click, starting with the kick/snare pattern, then the hi-hats and finally the fills. With the help of a wonderful sound engineer, Dave Richards – who is sadly no longer with us – I delved really deep into time and learned so much about beat placement from working on those tracks with him in that way."

T: "I actually met Dave before he passed. He engineered Queen and also Roger Taylor's first solo record, *Fun In Space*. Did you see any of the Queen guys while you were there?"
P: "No, sadly, but I did meet David Bowie, which was just amazing. He was good friends with Robin and came along to the session one day. I walked into the control room after doing a take, and he said in that Brixton accent of his: 'Listen, son, if you're going to hit 'em, hit 'em! Go do it again'. He was the most incredible, down to earth, superstar, handsome, charismatic person I had ever met! I was 22 and he was so nice to me – I'll never forget that encounter with him."

T: "I love that he told you to go back in and give it a whack! That whole experience sounds like an incredible crash course in learning to recognise when you are on the money with your time."
P: "Absolutely, but I was trying to be a LinnDrum before the LinnDrum was invented!" ▷

PHIL'S KIT

SAKAE DRUMS, VIC FIRTH DRUMSTICKS, REMO DRUMHEADS

T: "But at the end of the day you played it – you weren't using a drum machine..."

P: "I did, and I became anally retentive about time and the motion of it all. It was like being in a different kind of college, and I began to analyse the arc of the stick as I was playing – making sure it was coming up to the same height every time I hit the snare.

"The first four Level 42 records weren't recorded to click, but we had that mentality, that idea of tightness, and – even when we were doing our first record – I think that I had a certain view of time that wasn't perhaps as loose as it may have been before that experience in Montreux."

T: "Dave [Grohl] has such an amazing sense of time and was only 20 when he did *Nevermind* without a click. I really struggled on *There Is Nothing Left To Lose* – the first record I made with the Foo Fighters – as I literally didn't know how to do it... Dave was incredibly supportive and held my hand throughout, though – he wanted to help me be able play the songs – but I was scared and battling red light fever.

"We've made records together for so long now that, of course, it has become easier, but even now when I sit down to lay a drum track for the Foos, it dings my bell and takes about three days off my life! When I'm in my own studio at home making music with friends, it's a different mindset altogether, and I can usually lay down drums on the first or second take."

P: "I found I ended up almost micromanaging the sticks just to try and get myself into that perfect place..."

T: "I did that for a while, too, but then Dave gave me some advice that was literally a lightning bold moment for me – a bit like your Montreux experience. He told me to listen to the backbeat, just with a third of my ear so I could still play the music and be in the moment. He said that if the beat sounds like it's landing in roughly the same place every time, then I was probably ok. I'm sure you knew that when you were 17, but I didn't know that until I was 28, and it was a game changer! And when I've watched you playing with Level 42, I've certainly never seen someone who is worrying about where the hi-hat is – just someone who is lost in the groove."

P: "I think I always just tried to copy the pocket of drummers I admired, like Richie Hayward..."

T: "I knew Richie, and I used to bug him all the time about the drums on Robert Plant's 'Little By Little' – I loved that track. Like Richie, your playing is all about groove and pocket, and even though you have the chops, you don't let them out very often..."

P: "I always just wanted to play that simply. Even in my Level 42 days, I used to get a lot of flak from drummers asking why I didn't do more grace notes or fills – but I just didn't feel that. A lot of drummers when they are asked to play funk start to get really busy, but as in most types of 'dance' music, less is usually more. We had a very busy bass player in Mark [King], so I had to leave a bit of space...

"It's interesting, because I remember having a conversation with the guys once when we were touring America supporting Steve Winwood. 'Back In The High Life Again' had just come out, and the simplicity of that John JR Robinson drum track epitomised everything that I had been trying to do. Even my own bandmates were often quite critical that I wasn't playing more, but I told them to listen to that track to understand where I was coming from. Of course, I have always loved the guys that can fly on the drums, but that's just not my headspace."

T: "Who were your early influences?"

P: "When I was 14 and just starting to bang on things, my cousin, Nick, had a copy of *Fragile* by Yes. I was looking at the sleeve and there was this great picture of Bill Bruford under lights. When I saw that it was like an electric shock, and I knew instantly that I wanted to be a drummer. Bill and Dave Mattacks were my guys – I followed and copied everything they did when I first started out."

T: "I loved Bill Bruford, too – he really had a groove, and his drumming just got better and better... He also had the ability to make 'stiff' sound really funky – a hard thing to do. Does he know what a big influence he had on you?"

P: "Not the whole story, but the impact he had on so many people is quite incredible... Harvey Mason was another big influence – again, the minimalism of his playing really appealed. Take George Benson's version of 'This Masquerade' from the album *Breezin'* – the way Harvey played behind the solo on that tune was another real lightbulb moment for me. I love the relentless nature of the groove, no fills and only one cymbal crash halfway through! I remember playing it to Mark once, and he

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

"I USED TO GET A LOT OF FLAK FROM DRUMMERS ASKING WHY I DIDN'T DO MORE GRACE NOTES OR FILLS – BUT I JUST DIDN'T FEEL THAT."

Image: Richard Ecclestone/Getty Images

Image: Maria Zhytnikova

just shook his head – he was always more of a 'Lenny White' kind of guy! Ringo Starr, Hal Blaine, Earl Palmer, Bernard Purdie, Steve Jordan... Again we come back to that idea of simplicity.

"And then there was Fred E. White, one of the early members of Earth, Wind & Fire. Like me, he just played groove, and a pivotal moment was hearing him on Donny Hathaway's *Live* album. He was only 16 at the time, and his playing is so minimal, but the impact on me was enormous – I knew that's how I wanted my drumming to be. I also loved Billy Cobham and Tony Williams, too – I stole a lot from those guys! Tony's playing is very 'on top' and so musical..."

T: "I love how he did those flams really close together..."

P: "And the Swiss tap thing – I stole all of that stuff!"

T: "Tony also looked at time elastically – never like it needed to be at a constant 120bmp all the way through. I didn't get him when I young – I was too into Rush. Fusion came later for me.

Image: Aude Chagnon Caumet

BEAUTIFUL WOUNDS

Gould shows his song-writing chops on second solo record

Beautiful Wounds is Phil Gould's first solo release since *Watertight* in 2009. The album features contributions from Wally Badarou, who worked extensively with Level 42, bassist Yolanda Charles and players from all over the world.

"It's been pieced together over time," says Gould. The album was recorded in multiple locations, from Chale Abbey Studios on the Isle of Wight to sessions in Los Angeles, Rome and London. Some of the ideas have been dusted off from the vaults: "There is a track called 'The Fear Of Fear' on the album, which is actually an idea dating back about 20 years," says Gould. "I have a musical ecological approach in that nothing is wasted, so it might take 20 years for an idea to become relevant. There's another track called 'Truly Wise', and the chord progression dates back to Level 42 times, and I just thought, 'I really like that'."

The album is a showcase for Gould as a singer, keys player and songwriter, rather than as a drummer. The drum parts are all about groove and supporting the songs. "I just wanted to play that simply," says Gould. "Because I'm not messing about with fills, people think it's all programmed, but it's not."

Phil's brother, Rowland 'Boon' Gould, who died in 2019, plays guitar on the instrumental track 'The Russian Submariner'. "I can engage with it now because it was way too emotional until very recently," says Gould. "It was the last session he did. I wasn't sure about using it, but I had a chat with his daughter and got her blessing because I didn't want to be seen to be exploiting it. The reality was he played so great that I just wanted people to hear it. It's kind of a wild journey, this album, but some beautiful moments. Strange days."

T: "Roger Taylor was my first big influence – he looked so great on that big drum set, screaming those high notes. Then I looked on the credits and saw that he also wrote songs. That's another thing that I love about you, Phil – you make your own music, and you were one of the main lyricists in Level 42. I never wanted to just be a drummer, and it was players like you and Roger who showed me that that was possible..."

P: "Well, like you, I was inspired by the fact that the drummers I was into also wrote songs – like Bill Bruford on *Fragile* and Billy Cobham. I was a massive Queen fan myself, actually, and I was so impressed by the fact that every member of that band wrote a number one hit. To this day, I think that Roger is seriously underrated, because his time is impeccable and his fills are just amazing. I've always liked drummers who play a fill like a melody, and for me Roger is kind of an arranger within the arrangement."

T: "I also loved how he started to use colours in his drumming – little accents like rototoms and bells around the time of *News Of The World*. Another drummer who did that, of course, was

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

"YOU'VE GOT TO FIND A UNIQUE PERSONALITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE MUSIC."

Stewart Copeland, another big influence of mine. When you watch him live on the *Synchronicity* tour, he is so strong and he's not even playing to a click track. He's playing to the track behind him, and he never gets off it."

P: "We supported The Police in Germany once and learnt another big lesson. At that time, Level 42 were coming up and we thought we were doing pretty well, playing to around 500 people a night in UK clubs. But the first gig we did with The Police was in front of 5,000, and we got booed off that night. When I watched Stewart perform later and saw how he commanded that space, that's when I realised exactly what we had to do to be on that stage and own it. So the next night, we got rid of all the jazz funk gear, went out in jeans and t-shirts with a lot more attitude, and went for it. Happy to say that we got the lighters that time!"

T: "You learned pretty quick how to do punk funk!"

P: "We were fierce on stage – partly through fear! And to create that live energy you've really got to get on top of it and drive things forward. When punk exploded, I was surrounded by musos, and it was my dirty little secret that I actually loved the Sex Pistols and that whole era of British music that was opening the door to something really very special."

T: "For me it was The Clash with Topper Headon. He was great – he really knew how to play – and some of those drum tracks are so tight and funky. I bet they kicked ass live..."

P: "That solidity of power in any band comes from playing live with those same musicians night after night. I toured nonstop with Level 42 from the age of 22 right up until I was 30, and – you'll know this as well – you develop a really deep level of communication that almost becomes part of your soul.

"It's funny, but when I look back now it was ridiculous how quickly everything happened for Level 42. From jamming in my music college we got an independent deal for a 12" single, which proceeded to sell 70,000 copies in London. Next thing you know, we've got a five-album deal with Polydor, and one of the first gigs we did was to 3,000 people at the Hammersmith Palais!"

T: "As a band, where did you find common ground in terms of influences?"

P: "I started playing in my brother's folk-rock band, so folk music was a thing, but we were also really into rock, prog and funk – especially James Brown – and all the incredible things coming out of the States at the time, like Weather Report and Stevie Wonder. Mark is actually a great drummer, but his influences come more from a Tony Williams/Lenny White-type vibe.

"It's interesting, because when I look around now there seems to be a whole new language in drumming with the contemporary players coming through, and I have nothing but admiration for what they're doing. Of the British drummers, the likes of Ash Soan, Jeremy Stacey and Karl Brazil are doing great things. And when I watch YouTube, I see incredible drummers doing stuff that I could only dream about.

"But one thing that does frustrate me a little bit is that a lot of younger players – who are very technically gifted – don't seem to be thinking too much about their sound. Having an individual voice on your instrument has always been a key thing for me, and in Level 42 we had that mentality. We were all striving for our own sound, and for me personally, it took a good few years to find it.

"As the drummer in a band, I believe that you've got to find a unique personality within the context of the music, and the greatest example of a drummer defining the sound of a band is John Bonham. Without that drummer and without that sound, Zeppelin would not have been Zeppelin. Stewart Copeland, Billy Cobham, Harvey Mason, Steve Gadd – you know it's them from the opening bars of a tune. Part of my ongoing mission as a musician has always been to find my own sound, and also the right sound for the project that I am working on at that moment in time."

Image: David Wolff/Getty Images

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

TY SEGALL

FROM HIGH SCHOOL PARTIES TO PSYCHEDELIC ROCK WITH THE FUZZ MAN

"I'm stoked that Ty Segall agreed to be part of this special issue of *Rhythm*," Taylor says. "Like me, he grew up in Laguna Beach, California, and it's really interesting to talk to another musician from that small town who is finding their own path and doing their own thing.

"I remember the first time I heard Ty on the radio, I couldn't help but sit up and take notice of the cool, 'John Lennon-y' voice that was coming at me from the speakers in my car. When I went and checked him out, it was incredible to see how many different collaborations and projects he's been involved in after originally starting out on drums, and I've been watching proudly ever since.

"I really don't know how to label him, because he's all over the mountain – from the Hot Chocolate *Every 1's A Winner* cover, to the crazy '60s psychedelic stuff that he does... Not only is Ty a great drummer, a great artist and a great songwriter, like all my favourite musicians he has his own thing going on. I'm a big fan, and I love that the art he is producing is cool and different, and that it stands out from the crowd..."

Taylor: "So, how did you get into music in the first place?"

Ty: "My dad was actually a drummer and he got me a kit. There's early footage of me banging on things when I was little, but I was around 11 years old when I started getting into it properly, and I just remember how much fun it was... I had a Walkman and my first cassette was The Beatles' *Abbey Road*, so I would play along to that and sound horrible! Even though my parents were cool about the noise, my neighbours ended up hating me...and the cops knew me by name as they would have to keep coming around to tell me not to play after 10pm!"

T: "I hear you – I had to make deals with my neighbours when I first started playing drums in my parents' garage! Did you have a band in high school?"

Ty: "I had a weird journey with my musical tastes. To begin with, I was really into the classic rock stuff – like Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and The Who – and then I got into punk super hard and then into no wave – James Chance And The Contortions, ESG, Sonic Youth... My first band was based firmly on the likes of DNA and ESG and those early New York groups..."

T: "Were you behind the kit?"

Ty: "Yes. My friend Coleman Moore played bass and synth at the same time, Mikal Cronin – who is still in my band now – played sax and I was on drums. What did we sound like? Disco, noise, punk – we were all over the place! We played house parties and had so much fun."

T: "Sounds like you had more success with shows in Laguna than I did – my live experiences were few and far between..."

Ty: "Well, credit where credit is due, and it was all thanks to Mikal's parents because they let us use their tennis court for those house parties. We were actually really respectful – we were so worried about them not letting us do it anymore! And they went from a small, early vibe of us having 25 kids there, until everyone at the high school was talking about it and 150 people would show up!"

T: "What a rush! What did those early shows teach you?"

Ty: "It showed us that all these people from different cliques – no matter who they were – could come and share a common interest and have fun. It was like we had all joined a club and were in on the secret. You could see people for more than who they were supposed to be and it was a powerful thing. It made me realise that I wanted to be in a band and how music could bring people together. If I look back now, those shows at Mikal's house were almost like mini 'generator parties' – those gatherings that were taking place in the ▷

Image: Dénee Segall

desert around that time with bands like Kyuss. People could just hang out, be safe and enjoy themselves – it was really cool."

T: "It's so great that some of you guys from school are still making your art together..."
Ty: "It really is, and another one of our school friends, Charles Moothart, still collaborates a lot with Mikal and me and also plays drums in one of my groups, The Freedom Band. It's Charles playing drums on the Hot Chocolate cover."

T: "Did you discover your voice around the time of those house parties?"
Ty: "I did musical theater at school, and it's funny, because everyone I have been in a band with has *made* me sing. I've actually never been in a band where I have just played drums and not sung – which is weird! These days, I love the opportunity to do a session on drums and not sing, because I can really focus on just my playing."

T: "Do you find that when you are singing and drumming it makes your playing have more of a 'song' element to it?"
Ty: "I feel like – and I have had people say this to me – that when I play drums it's more like I am dancing or singing. I don't think I fall into keeping the beat in a traditional way, it's definitely more by using melodic lines and fills as my beats."

T: "Almost like a songwriter who also just happens to be a drummer – like Stevie Wonder or Paul McCartney – as opposed to the best drummer in the world who can play a trillion notes a second..."
Ty: "Exactly. I hear drums as another type of melody."

T: "One of the things I always loved about Stephen Perkins's drumming is the way that he hears melody and is almost telling a story when he plays. And John Densmore from The Doors – he's awesome."
Ty: "And Keith Moon as well... For me, he's one of the most poetic drummers of all time."

T: "Who would you say have been your biggest drumming influences?"
Ty: "Different drummers have inspired me at different times. To begin with, it was the greats like John Bonham, Keith Moon, Mitch Mitchell, Bill Ward... When I got into vinyl, I would save up my lunch money and buy a different classic rock album every week. They were only about 50 cents each at my local record store in Laguna, and it was so cool that I could get a Cream record for that price. I still have all those albums now – complete with the 'bargain' stickers!

"As I got older and more into punk and different styles of music, Robo – from Black Flag – was a really big influence, and I loved the fast drumming of the guy in T.S.O.L. Alan Myers from Devo was another guy that inspired me, as was The Germs' drummer, Don Bolles. I think really I've always been more influenced by drummers who had an interesting and unique personality on their kit, rather than the players with a more professional, scholarly type of precision. There is one drum roll that Don Bolles does that is almost inhuman and doesn't make any sense, but I would become obsessed with weird things like that. Things that aren't necessarily 'right', but sound amazing, you know? There is nothing cooler than a drummer who serves the song – it's a completely different vibe and personality – but, at the same time, I also love people who play the drums like a lead instrument. Like the classic power trios where those heavy drums always have a very present, musical voice."

T: "When did you start playing other instruments, and what was it that inspired you to want to become more than just a drummer? For me, it was Roger Taylor – he showed me that all these other things are possible..."
Ty: "I got a four-track recorder as a gift when I was in seventh grade, and that changed everything for me. I started trying to make songs and became interested in melody. Because I was always a singer and I played drums, it was just a case of filling the gaps by adding another instrument, really.

"Becoming a songwriter really informed my drumming, and, even now, I get really excited about the idea that a drum beat is a riff... I love thinking about songs that way, and you just have to listen to Zeppelin's 'When The Levee Breaks' or James Brown's 'Funky Drummer' to hear great examples of it. I'd say that half the songs I write are

Image: Suzi Pratt/Getty Images

based around the drums, and the drums also help me with the structure of the track and the vocals. There are so many different ways to think about everything, but ultimately all the different components are speaking to each other, that's for sure!"

T: "You certainly keep yourself busy with all the different projects you have on the go!"

Ty: "I am just a fan of any, and all, collaborations – any variation is always rewarding, and I just have a great time working with other artists. I still think that the drums are the most fun for me in all of this, though. I learnt the guitar and I love writing songs on it, but if I were to distil myself down to the most fun, pure, musical thing, it's always going to be the drums. I've always loved playing them so much – it's almost an ethereal and emotional thing for me – and I feel like I have a different, inferred language with them; I don't even have to think about it, I just do it."

T: "It's definitely the thing that I am best at, that's for sure!"

Ty: "And for me, too – and where I feel most comfortable and free."

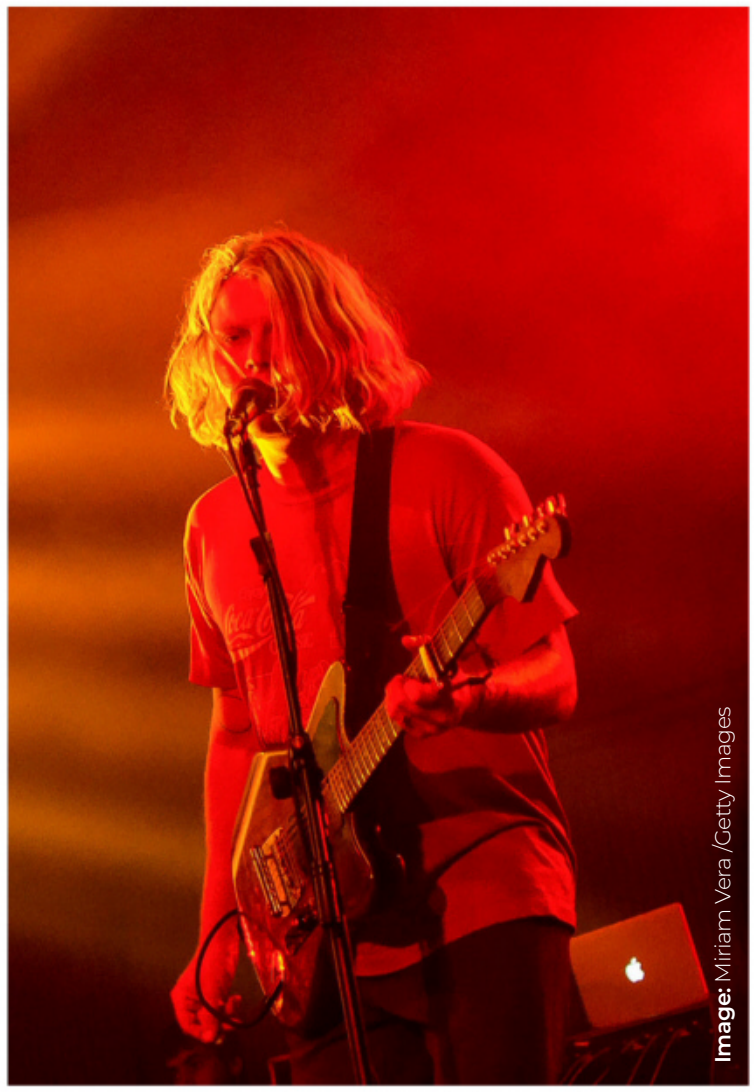

Image: Miriam Vera /Getty Images

TAYLOR TAKES OVER!

Image: Denee Segall

T: "When you graduated high school, did you split Laguna Beach?"

Ty: "I did – I went to college in San Francisco. It just seemed like a really cool, open-minded place to go, and there was a lot of great music happening there at the time – awesome noise rock like Deerhoof and Coachwhips that my buddy John Dwyer was in, and then he was also a member of Thee Oh Sees later on.

"I was really into that music and wanted to be part of something – I wasn't ever thinking about it in a professional way at that point, though. I was just happy that my parents were letting me go to San Francisco – and that happened because I was still going to school. And it was so cool to suddenly be meeting new people and spreading my wings. Being raised in a small town, I was ready to get out of there and see what was on the other side, you know?"

T: "Absolutely, and it's interesting when you look at the number of musicians that have started their journey in Laguna – there's you, me, Travis Barker, Dean Butterworth, Drew Hester, Tris Imboden... How did music eventually start to turn into something more serious for you?

Ty: "I think the answer to that question is that I never actually wanted to become a professional musician, but I feel really grateful for where I have ended up. For me, playing drums and making music was always about having fun – and it's a total accident that I now find myself in this position! I've just seen every step of this journey – making an album, going on tour – as a fun opportunity, and what's happened is pretty cool. My goal from the beginning was simply to make one interesting record – I'm not sure that I have necessarily done that yet, but I'm incredibly grateful to be doing what I'm doing."

T: "What have you been up to during lockdown? I heard that you've been building your own studio?"

Ty: "That's exactly what I have been doing – writing, recording and plotting my next move, and the studio has given me a positive focus... I've got three rooms; you come into the control room, then the live room and the drum room is at the back. The drum room is a strange space, so that's good, and I designed the ceilings to be a bit weird – I tried to avoid too many right angles, and I've been tweaking the sound in there. The really cool thing is that the live room is extremely live, and the drum room is super dead, so I like to just open up the door and put the room mics in the live room. That way, you've got the best of both worlds. I'm a Ludwig guy, and I've got my two little kits from the '50s in there. They may be old and beat up, but they sound incredible!"

T: "Like us, I bet you are looking forward to coming out of the other side of this whole thing and playing some proper live shows again?"

Ty: "I'll play in any way, in any form, anywhere – I don't care, as long as it's safe and cool and everyone feels comfortable. Playing live is such a great thing, and I can't wait until there are hundreds of people dancing around in a sweaty room again!"

Gear!

The latest kits and the new gear drummers need – reviewed and rated by our team of experts

In this issue we're testing out the brand-new-for-2021 Tama Starclassic Performer. Gone are the days of the classic Performer B/B (bubinga/birch), with bubinga being on the endangered list for a few years now. It's time to make way for the new maple/birch combo. Mark gives us the lowdown on Tama's new offering along with Zildjian's entry-range 'i' Family cymbals. A modern replacement for the now-infamous 'ZBT' series (which, like many others, were my first-ever set).

On the electronic front, we check out two of the big dogs, Alesis and Roland, showing off their new kits. Alesis's Debut Kit promises to deliver everything a budding drummer needs to get playing within minutes of opening the box – whereas the new Roland TD-07KV bridges a gap between its entry-level TD-1 kit and the mid-range TD-17. With a brand-new module and some awesome features borrowed from their higher-end kits, this is one to look out for.

Finally, we take a look at the latest offering from Code Drum Heads in the form of their Signal Range. Single-ply heads that can take an absolute battering? See what Matt had to say after putting them through their paces.

Alesis Debut Kit **p74**

Tom Bradley

Rhythm Gear Editor

Meet Rhythm's Reviewers

Rhythm has been reviewing the gear drummers need for decades. Our team of expert reviewers have sat behind countless kits on stage and in the studio so you can rely on them to bring you the right verdict. Plus, we find out who their biggest source of inspiration is...

TOM BRADLEY

With an unquenchable thirst for new drum gear, Tom is perfectly placed to be *Rhythm*'s reviews editor. He's not only a longstanding member of our review team but also a lecturer at BIMM and a busy performing drummer. You may recognise Tom as the man behind the kit in many of the online gear videos on our YouTube channel.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"If I had to pick just one, I think I would have to go with Benny Greb. His first DVD opened my eyes to a world of possibility."

MARK WHITLAM

Mark is a freelance musician who has played for varied artists, from Mercury Prize-nominee Eliza Carthy through to jazz and funk legend Pee Wee Ellis. He is currently one-quarter of ECM recording artist Iain Ballamy's new band, featuring pianist Jason Rebello. Mark is a senior lecturer at BIMM Institute Bristol, where he has taught for the last ten years.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"Brian Blade! He's so authentic in everything he does, and, whilst being completely in the moment and a huge risk-taker, he's always playing in service of the music. Incredible."

Code Drum Heads Signal Range
p77

Tama Starclassic Performer Kit
p70

Roland TD-07KV Kit
p80

Rhythm Verdict

The **RHYTHM RECOMMENDED** award is given to those products that score seven or eight out of ten. These are products that, although not quite scoring top marks, are strong products in their field.

The **RHYTHM STAR BUY** is awarded to those products that score nine or even ten out of ten for design, construction, function and value.

Rhythm Ratings

Here's what our ratings represent:

Poor: Sub-standard product	1 - 2
Average: Acceptable but uninspiring	3 - 4
Good: Above average	5 - 6
Excellent: Superior product	7 - 8
Outstanding: Impossible to fault	9 - 10

Zildjian i Family Pro Gig Cymbal Pack
p78

MATT FISHER

Matt has performed with some of the UK's most prominent musicians, such as Tina May, Jacqui Dankworth, Najma Akhtar and Steve Waterman. He has toured around the world working in a variety of styles, from jazz to world music. Matt teaches at Chichester University and is an examiner for Trinity College London.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"That's such a difficult question to answer. But overall, it would probably be Buddy Rich!"

Tama Starclassic Performer Kit

Rhythm STAR BUY

Tama's excellent new arrival earns its stripes – and then some!

Words: **Mark Whitlam**

PRICE: £1,199 (four-piece kit); £1,399 (five-piece kit); £259 (snare)

Wow, that is an arresting finish! This is our initial thought as we unpack this five-piece set from Tama. It is called Caramel Aurora, a name that may be intended to evoke thoughts of the northern lights, yet the warm amber and woody brown hues conjure up more of a feeling of the exotic warmth of Africa.

It looks something like Zebra wood, but this is in fact a paint process that is then lacquered – no generic wrap here – each drum is unique in this respect. It is certainly a bold choice and one of the four listed finishes of the Starclassic Performer. Check out the Molten Steel Blue Burst finish, too – these are not going to be to everyone's taste, but they certainly make a change from the usual subdued offerings from many companies.

This 2021 reincarnation of the Starclassic Performer features maple/birch hybrid shells. The toms are 6mm thick, consisting of four plies of birch surrounding an inner two plies of maple, whilst the bass drum is slightly thicker, at 7mm, with an extra ply of birch on the outside.

The birch/maple combo has become something of a modern classic, giving us a balance of projection and attack from birch wood with the warmth and low-end synonymous with maple drums.

Toms Aplenty

Setting up the array of toms, we have a configuration of 10"x7" and 12"x8" suspension-mounted toms, featuring Tama's Star-Cast mourning system (more on this later), paired with shallower floor toms measuring 14"x12" and 16"x14" standing on shock-isolated legs.

It is quite a luxury these days to have a kit featuring four toms, with the current vogue being one-up, one-down configurations. The toms were tuned quite high on arrival and speak quickly and clearly, with a roundness of tone, from the Evans G1-coated heads. However, in our opinion these drums really find their sweet spot at more medium to lower tunings. Here, the drums exude an inherent warmth, in equal balance from the smallest to largest tom, though there are some slight tonal differences that work well. The 10" and 12" have a rounded tone and slightly more reserved volume, whilst the 14" and 16" floor toms produce a little more attack and a decent amount of decay.

Having the range of four drums naturally lends itself to playing melodic-sounding grooves, which is what we immediately proceed to do. Those subtle differences between the smaller and larger pair of drums work incredibly well, allowing the lower-pitch drums to sing out a little more when playing tom groove patterns or more standard fills around the set. They all have a controlled volume and are in no way aggressive-sounding drums. Their rather refined nature, paired with a healthy amount of sustain, makes for a really musical experience playing across the four drums.

Tom Hardware

Along with the maple inner plies adding warmth, much of the focused tone of the toms is due to the sturdy die-cast hoops top and bottom – the same as those featured on their flagship models, the likes of which Peter Erskine and Stewart Copeland can be seen using.

They Say:

SIMEON READ
MARKETING AND PERCUSSION PRODUCT SPECIALIST, HEADSTOCK DISTRIBUTION

What are the main differences between the Starclassic and Starclassic Performer lines?
"The difference is very much the wood they are made from. Our all-maple Starclassic kits have been the main player in the market since bubinga became endangered in 2017. In 2019, we introduced the new Starclassic walnut/birch combination, and for 2021 the maple/birch has been added to the line-up, giving three distinctive sounds to choose from. The combination of woods in the new Starclassic Performer kit projects with the warmth of maple and the clarity of birch. Tones are clean, articulate and very well balanced."

The Caramel Aurora and Molten Blue Steel Burst are unique finishes. What's the process in creating them?
"To make Caramel Aurora and Molten Steel Burst, we first put the paint layers on the shell before removing the top layer with solvent to show up the wood grain. The patterns are changed depending on how much lacquer is applied and subsequently removed with the solvent. All done by hand, this process makes those finishes unique."

Tama Starclassic Performer Kit

Tama certainly has not skimped here in terms of build quality, and these high-end features extend to the Star-Cast mounting system. Where most suspension mounts hang on the tuning lugs to avoid contact with the shell, Tama's designers take the unique approach of joining the hoop at three completely different points. Being independent of the lugs not only makes head changes much easier but is designed to further increase resonance.

The Meaty Low-End

Underpinning these melodic beauties is a 22"x16" bass drum, which is undrilled, so you will need to clamp your tom mounts to cymbal stands. What you may lose in ease of set up is amply repaid in the body of sound from this virgin bass drum.

"IT'S QUITE REFRESHING FROM A MODERN BASS DRUM TO HEAR IT PACK A PUNCH WITHOUT SACRIFICING ANY RICHNESS AND WARMTH OF TONE."

1 2

3

1. Eye-catching Finish
The unique Caramel Aurora finish is not a wrap but a unique paint process covered with high-gloss lacquer.

2. Shallower Floor Tom Depths
Delivers attack yet retains plenty of rich sustain.

3. Old-school Vibes
The matching snare can be added to the five-piece set and offers a wealth of tones all imbued with a wonderful vintage colouration.

4. Unique Tom Suspension Mount
Avoids the usual lug and tuning rod location, making head replacement a cinch and improving resonance.

5. Zinc Die-cast Hoops
The weighty hoops help produce a focused tone from the toms.

6. Hybrid Shells
Four outer plies of birch married with two inner plies of maple.

7. Big Bottom-End
The virgin bass drum offers up oodles of attack paired with rich sub-bass frequencies.

4

5

6 7

Without any muffling (aside from the pre-dampened Evans EQ4 Clear drumhead) and tuned fairly low, our ears are treated to a perfect balance of attack and meaty tone. It's quite refreshing from a modern bass drum to hear it pack a punch without sacrificing any richness and warmth of tone.

Wide open like this, it reminds us a little of Keith Carlock's sound but without being overly resonant. Placing some dampening inside the drum does not detract from the full-bodied lows this drum pumps out. It really is quite an impressive sound and feel, almost giving the impression of being a larger diameter than it is. We feel sure it would be equally well suited in both live and studio settings.

Matching Snare

We were also supplied with a 14"x6½" matching snare drum, which can be bought as an addition to the five-piece shell pack. If the finish of this kit was not enough of a surprise, the sound that greeted our ears from this snare drum was truly unexpected.

At mid-range tunings it spits out a guttural, deep throaty roar, with more ferocity than the rest of the kit, whilst retaining the familial warmth, and forms a great companion for the bass drum in this sense. At lower tunings without any dampening, it is honky and perfect for some swampy Americana slow tempos. But it is at higher tunings that this drum summons the spirit of the '60s and, well, actually sounds quite a lot like Roundbadge, with that vintage classic tone. Yes, it took me by surprise, too! This is quite a special drum and worthy of sitting in the company of the rest of this kit.

Clearly, however, there are compromises one makes when buying this less-expensive version of the Starclassic. The Performer's limited colour options is one of these, and the dearer model also features sturdier bass drum spurs and quick-lock tom mounts – but otherwise, the hardware is of similar top-notch build quality. There are slight differences in the numbers of plies, and the Starclassic wood choices are either maple or a walnut/maple blend.

The Performer is available in two standard configurations – the one we have for review here and a four-piece shell pack that includes slightly deeper 10"x8" and 12"x9" toms mounted to the 22"x16" bass drum, and a single 16"x14" floor tom. There is a fairly comprehensive range of other diameter and depth combinations of toms and bass drums that can be bought to augment the two configurations offered.

At this price point, Tama are more than punching their weight with competitor brands and is our 'Star Buy'.

CONTACT
www.tama.com/eu/

Verdict

Despite being a few rungs below their flagship kits, Tama really have produced an accomplished instrument, loaded with tone and great build quality. Definitely worth checking out.

Rhythm Rating

9/10

Alesis Debut Kit

Alesis steps up with their latest Debut Kit bundle, an affordable electronic kit providing everything the beginner drummer needs

Words: **Matt Fisher**

PRICE: £229.99

American music tech giants Alesis have become a big name in the world of electronic drums. After introducing the Midiverb, one of the world's first affordable studio-quality effects processors, Alesis ventured into drum machines in 1990 with the SR-16 – which is still available to this day.

With affordability and quality at the heart of its operation, 1995 saw the introduction of the DM5 drum sound module, which was another bestseller. More than 25 years later, Alesis are still producing some of the most affordable and quality products, with the new Debut Kit being no exception to their neat lineup.

Aimed at the young beginner drummer, the small size of the kit makes it suitable for around 5 to 10-year-olds who may not be big enough for a larger kit but want something to get started on. Included in the pack is everything the player will need to get going straight away, including the 6" mesh pads, two 10" cymbals, bass drum and hi-hat foot pedals, a sturdy drum rack, drum throne, headphones and sticks.

Let's take a closer look at what this engaging little kit has to offer.

Easy Setup

First of all, we really enjoyed how quick this was to set up. From the box it takes minutes to put together, making it probably the quickest electronic kit we have ever assembled.

The four mesh pads are already pre-assembled to the drum frame, meaning all the player has to do is plug them into the module and fix on the cymbal pads before they are ready to rock. The rack is sturdy, and everything is set out as it would be on a standard kit. The lightweight rack is easily foldable, meaning the kit can be quickly dismantled and put away when not in use, making this ideal for those who may be short on space.

Sound Module

The sound module contains 10 classic and modern-sounding drum kit presets, with 120 individual sounds overall. Considering this is a budget electronic kit, the sounds are surprisingly realistic, and there is a wide range to choose from, including reverb-driven rock kit sounds and some interesting tabla and Afro-Cuban percussion sets.

There are 30 play-along tracks to practice with, featuring a range of styles. The built-in metronome makes for an ideal practice tool, with adjustable sounds, a flashing LED, changeable time signatures and subdivisions.

The highlight for us, though, is the integrated drum coach, which has five specially designed rhythmic functions. These consist of exercises and tools that enable the user to work on timing accuracy and stamina via a variable metronome that increases speed over a set measure, and functions to develop a sense of tempo. This is a pretty fun practice tool, which interacts with the user, giving live feedback and a score based on your beat accuracy.

The AUX input makes it easy to connect up music from another device to play along with. Alesis have teamed up with music learning software Melodics, which comes with the kit, giving access to 60 free lessons, in addition to a number of other educational tools and resources.

The module can be connected to an external sound module, an amplifier or the included headphones. Using MIDI, this can also be hooked up to the player's laptop, opening up further possibilities, such as recording the kit straight onto a laptop or using it as a trigger for other sounds. So, whilst this may be a budget starter kit, there is actually a lot of functionality, which, for the price tag, gives it great value for money.

"FROM THE BOX IT TAKES MINUTES TO PUT TOGETHER, MAKING IT PROBABLY THE QUICKEST ELECTRONIC KIT WE HAVE EVER ASSEMBLED."

Pads and Pedals

An additional feature we enjoyed in the Debut were the 6" mesh-head drum pads, which offer a realistic playing feel compared with some other budget brands. The pads are quiet, making this neighbour-friendly and ideal for silent practice with headphones.

The 10" cymbal pads offer a large playing surface and are very responsive. There are two pedals: one for the hi-hat controller and the other for the bass. Whilst these two pedals are sensitive, small and can be easily folded up when not in use, they don't quite have the same impact or feel that a regular pedal would have. That said, the size of the foot controls is obviously designed for young children, and the lack of impact of the pedals on an additional pad, again, make this a perfect solution for quiet practice.

CONTACT
www.alesis.com

1. Ready, Steady, Drum!
The four mesh pads are already pre-assembled to the drum frame, making this a quick and easy set up.

2. Foldable Rack
A very sturdy, lightweight and easily foldable rack, so can be stored away quickly and efficiently when not in use.

3. What's for Starters?
The small size of this e-kit makes it a perfect starter kit for young children.

4. Sounds Galore
There are 10 kit presets on the module with a wide range of realistic sounds to choose from.

5. Personal Trainer
The drum coach has five specially designed rhythmic functions to enable the user to work on timing, providing feedback and a score rating.

6. Love thy Neighbour
The 6" mesh pads are quiet, making this neighbour-friendly and ideal for silent practice with headphones.

Verdict

Overall, this is a fabulous little kit. For the purpose of getting youngsters started on the drums, it is a perfect option in terms of value for money.

Rhythm Rating

7/10

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Code Drum Heads Signal Range

UK-based Code Drum Heads introduces the impressive Signal Range to their already extensive catalogue

Words: **Matt Fisher**

PRICE: From £12.49

Code Drum Heads is a Leicester, UK-based brand founded and run by James Potts and Embrace drummer Mike Heaton. The company's latest addition comes in the form of the Signal Range: single-ply drumheads that Code says are one of its hardest wearing to date.

Available in both Coated and Smooth White options, and in a wide variety of sizes (6" to 18" toms and snare, and 16" to 24" kick), for review we have 10", 12", 13" Signal Coated for the toms, plus a 14" for the snare and a 20" Signal Smooth for the kick.

Let's give them a test drive and see how they compare to the 'Big Three'.

Hands On

In practice, these heads fail to disappoint. In no time at all we are able to get a pleasingly deep tone on the toms, which perform extremely well under various stick velocities. It is clear these are heavy duty and can withstand some heavy hitting.

Signal heads are manufactured from a 14mm PET film ply and feature Code's Grip-Tight rim technology. According to Code, the combination of the rim design and thick single ply adds up to a mixture of depth, projection and attack that can take a pounding.

It is no surprise that we find the toms are able to hold their tuning excellently over an extended period. Moving around each of the toms, there is a deep sound with a truncated sustain that would sound perfect in any musical situation.

Moving on to the snare, we find that the head produces a crisp yet bright sound that has an amazing amount of cut to it. It becomes evident that these are great all-round heads that will take the strain of the more aggressive players out there, yet are sensitive enough for gentle brush work when required. The Signal Smooth kick head has a lovely, warm punch to it and a lot of volume. The in-built internal dampening ring also helps calm any unwanted overtones.

Overall, there's no question that these heads live up to the textural and sonic qualities of the major brands.

1. Heavy Duty
Signal heads are manufactured from a 14mm PET film ply and feature Code's Grip-Tight rim technology.

2. Coated or Smooth
Available in both Coated and Smooth White options, and in a variety of sizes starting at 6".

3. Versatile Heads
The coated skin has an amazing amount of cut to it yet is sensitive enough for gentle brush work when required.

4. Calming the Overtones
The kick head features an internal dampening ring that helps calm any unwanted overtones.

CONTACT
www.codedrumheads.co.uk

Verdict

Code's new Signal Range of single-ply drumheads offers surprising durability and a real depth of tone. They tick all the boxes and hold their own alongside the 'Big Three'.

Rhythm Rating

8/10

Zildjian
i Family Pro Gig Cymbal Pack

In an already crowded market, can Zildjian's entry-level range inspire a new audience of players to join their family?

Words: **Mark Whitlam**

PRICE: Price: £349 (Pro Gig Pack); £109 (18" China)

Zildjian's entry-level ZBT range of cymbals have been a go-to for beginner and budget-conscientious drummers for the past two decades. This line has now been discontinued and replaced with the newly designed i series, which shares the same B8 bronze alloy.

Whilst we are all aware of the meaning behind the 'A' and 'K' series names, what is the story behind the 'i' branding? Rather than being a name of one of the Zildjian family, 'i' takes its name from the Turkish word for inspiration: Ilham.

Our review set is the Pro Gig Pack, which consists of a pair of 14" hi-hats, 20" ride and two crashes, coming in at 16" and 18". In addition, we were supplied an 18" China cymbal, which can be purchased as an add-on, along with a number of other effects cymbals.

Build Quality

No one is expecting cymbals at this price point to be engineered to Kerope standards or feature hand-hammering. It was a little surprising, though, to find the finish quality on the edge of two of the cymbals to be lacking refinement, and actually slightly sharp to the touch in places. This may just be unique to the set we received.

All cymbals have two sets of lathing, one deeper and less frequent, the second much finer and making the majority of

the surface of the cymbals. Finishing this off are a number of concentric rings of circular hammer marks, around the size of a five-pence piece, which have the identical appearance of machine-production.

Sounding out the Set

The 20" ride is of medium weight, with a comparatively large diameter bell, and produces a relatively high-pitched, bright ping when played with the tip of the stick. The volume is very controlled and never starts to wash out, irrespective of the beating thrown at it.

The relatively oversized bell liberates a solid and strident tone, which would be well at home in rock and metal settings. You would have no problem in searing through a wall of distorted guitars with this guy. Hitting the edge produces a surprisingly pleasing crash sound – we found that this blends well in terms of pitch and timbre with the other two crash cymbals.

The 16" and 18" crashes weigh in on the medium-thin end of the spectrum. The same familial theme of brightness continues here. Both cymbals are surprisingly more high pitched than expected for their size – the 18" sounding more like a 16", and the smaller 16" responding in a more splash-like way, with a relatively short decay.

The 18" is the more versatile of the pair here. Played lightly with the tip of the stick it produces a sweet tone with a warm wash that would double well as an alternative ride for quiet sections of music, or even jazz and other styles. The bell, in contrast, is something of a monster and could hold its own as an alternative to the main ride bell, even in heavy music.

Finally, we come to the cymbals being used most of the time in groove playing. As you would expect, the bottom plate of the 14" hi-hat pair is heavier than the top, but only marginally so. The open-close 'shoop' sound is cutting and funky – think Bernard Purdie's classic fill in 'Rock Steady'.

Once again, this pair are similarly bright and high pitched as the rest of the set, and in many ways they sound more like a pair of 13" cymbals. When played closed, there is a rather pronounced 'zingy' note of definite pitch in the high-mid frequencies.

We must bear in mind that these were brand new out of the box, and cymbals do tend to mellow after some playing, so this may become less dominant over time. In contrast, when rocking out more half open, those higher frequencies are less prominent, leaving a more pleasing darker and dirtier tone, but still with enough volume to drive a loud band.

"PLAYED LIGHTLY WITH THE TIP OF THE STICK, IT PRODUCES A SWEET TONE WITH A WARM WASH."

1. Massive Bell
The oversized ride cymbal bell delivers a controlled but authoritative tone worthy of hard rock and metal.

2. Bronze Medals
The choice of entry-level cymbal manufacturers, B8 bronze alloy is used for the whole range.

3. Hammering the Groove
Uniform machine hammering finishes off the dual-lathed surface.

4. Oriental Accent
The 18" China has a definite pitch and 'pang'-like tone.

5. Bright Crashes
These have relatively high pitches and respond more like smaller cymbals.

6. Funky Hats
Whilst the closed sound of the hats might take some playing in, the open-closed bark and half-open wash is more pleasing.

Additional Sound Choices

The 18" China we received can be bought as an add-on – indeed, Zildjian offers a number of individual cymbals within the range – including a 17" Trash crash, 10" splash and larger 22" ride (amongst others) – allowing access to a wider palette of sonic colours over time. A Standard Cymbal Pack, which omits the 18" crash, is also available. In keeping with the brilliant timbre of the crashes, the 18" China speaks instantly with a bright, clear pitch that is more pang-like than a mellow roar. Again, it responds like a smaller-diameter cymbal, such as a 16" China.

At this price point, the 'i' Family has some impressive stablemates from the other big brand names, and time will tell how these new contenders will measure up.

CONTACT
www.zildjian.com

Verdict

Zildjian have presented the budget-conscious drummer with an above-average and balanced cymbals set. If brighter, splashier tones are to your taste, these might be right up your street.

Rhythm Rating

6/10

Roland TD-07KV Kit

Roland's new all-mesh kit is not only affordable but is also keeping a few surprising tricks up its sleeve

Words: **Tom Bradley**

PRICE: £923.00

Released at the end of last year, Roland's TD-07KV bridges the gap between the company's entry-level TD-1 models and the mid-range TD-17KV. The compact setup features the brand-new TD-07 module, which boasts several features previously out of reach at this price point – making it a strong contender for first-time buyers or drummers looking to upgrade from an entry-level setup.

The all-mesh eight-piece TD-07KV kit features an 8" dual-zone snare pad, three 6" single-zone toms and a 5" bass drum tower. Cymbals are all dual-zone and include a 10" hi-hat and 12" crash and ride pads – all of which are choke-able. For any uninitiated readers among you, this means that separate sounds can be triggered depending on where a pad is struck. Head or rim for the snare, bow and edge for the cymbals (alas, no bell trigger on these).

The PDX pads are low profile and easily distinguishable by a thick white plastic hoop (used to tension the mesh head), which sits just inside the outer rubber rim. It's worth noting that the tom pads are actually more like 9" in diameter as a result, rather than the stated 6", which only accounts for the mesh portion.

The super-compact steel frame used for the TD-07KV is the same one we've seen previously with the TD-1DMK, where the kick pad cleverly attaches directly to the H-shaped frame. This setup, however, comes supplied as standard with Roland's stand-alone KD-10 kick drum pad – hardware which is shared with its higher-end siblings, the TD-17 and TD-27 kits. It's no accident, we're sure, that the frame's shape makes it absolutely perfect for facing into a corner, saving enormously on space.

Despite small pad sizes then, and some single zone triggers, no real sacrifices have been made on the hardware front to reflect the significantly reduced price when compared with some of the more expensive offerings. That is, until we take the hi-hat pedal into question. Despite playing surprisingly well, the lightweight unit is constructed using a black plastic frame, finished with a brushed steel foot board that protrudes from the frame.

Aesthetically speaking, the pedal sticks out as a weak link within the overall setup and serves as a reminder that we're dealing with an entry-level (or should we say entry to mid-level) kit.

The TD-07 module itself tops the kit off nicely with its small and sleek look. Mounted neatly to the vertical post of the frame, drum pads are attached via a cable loom (DB-25), which also allows for expansion of an additional crash. Using the fairly minimalist interface, we're able to cycle through the 25 kit presets and put the in-built metronome and rhythm training features to good use.

The module features 143 individual instruments that can be used to create a further 25 user kit presets – an incredibly welcome feature at this price. In terms of connectivity, the TD-07 is hiding a few tricks up its sleeve, not least the Bluetooth audio capabilities, which make playing music from our devices an absolute doddle. It even reconnects automatically when you power on the module, so no faffing required. There is also a good old fashioned mini-jack input if you'd prefer a wired connection. USB connectivity allows for two-channel recording directly to a computer and opens up a whole world of MIDI capabilities.

"AS IS USUALLY THE CASE WITH ROLAND, THE RECORDED SAMPLES ARE HIGH QUALITY AND – WHEN COMBINED WITH THE SATISFYING PHYSICAL RESPONSE OF THE PADS – KEEP US COMING BACK FOR MORE."

In terms of actual playability, the TD-07KV does not disappoint. Despite a few minor issues getting the toms exactly where we wanted them (due to the fixed position of the middle section of the frame), the double-ply mesh heads feel fantastic to play, as does the KD-10 kick pad with its cushioned mesh surface. Positioning the cymbal pads is trouble free, thanks to the ball-joint equipped arms.

The preset kits include a good mixture of rock, metal, pop, studio, reggae, jazz, electronic, percussion kits and many more. As is usually the case with Roland, the recorded samples are high quality and – when combined with the satisfying physical response of the pads – keep us coming back for more.

Despite a reasonable playing experience

1. Alive and Kicking
The cushioned mesh head of the KD-10 absorbs shock from the bass drum beater, which makes for a satisfying sensation.

2. Beyond Entry Level
The TD-07KV bridges the gap between the entry-level TD-1 models and the mid-range TD-17 kits.

3. Room on the Loom
There is space for a second crash cymbal on the module, which could also be used for an additional tom (or anything for that matter).

4. In the Zone
The 8" snare pad and all cymbal pads are dual zone, while the toms are single zone.

5. Mothership Connection
Bluetooth functionality allows wireless audio from pretty much any device, and there's a mini-jack input for a wired connection.

6. Bang for your Buck
With all-mesh pads and a highly capable module, we think the TD-07KV represents excellent value for money.

out of the box, the TD-07 actually offers a frankly colossal amount of customisation. This includes the ability to change and move virtual microphones, alter room ambience and experiment with a range of effects. Each sound can then be dialled in to each respective area and also mixed and EQ'd.

Needless to say, this comes as a surprise from this little kit and results in the ability to design some fantastic-sounding kits. By default, the ride cymbal edge is set to a crash sound, although it can be switched to a bell. For those craving a triple-zone ride (bell/bow/edge), the second crash input can also be programmed to function as a secondary ride input – although that would require upgrading the pad itself.

CONTACT
www.roland.com/uk

Verdict

An affordable e-kit that punches well above its weight. Newer drummers will find it plays well out of the box, but there's plenty of growing room with custom kits and surprisingly deep effects menus.

Rhythm Rating

8/10

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OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD DRUM SOUNDS

Following on from Issue 298's comprehensive feature on Drum Studio Tech, *Rhythm* has teamed up with D16 Audio Group to offer readers the opportunity to own a complete set of their plugins, Silverline Collection, with three runners-up receiving their latest plugin, Spacerek.

WORTH MORE THAN £600

Silverline

is an easy-to-use collection of all D16's plugin effects: Spacerek, Redoptor 2, Fazortan 2, Godfazer, Toraverb 2, Tekuron, Decimort 2, Devastor 2, Antresol and Syntorus 2. These plugins offer musicians and producers of all genres outstanding sound effects and masses of design potential to add character and intensity to mixes (RRP £419).

Spacerek

is the latest plugin from D16. It is a high-quality, compact, clean and gentle reverb capable of beautiful sounds. It has been designed to offer users spatial realism without intricate parameters to create an extensive array of real-world spaces for the sonic placement of drums and other instruments (RRP £69).

HOW TO ENTER

For a chance to own a Silverline collection or Spacerek, answer the following question and email your answer to info@beatsnetwork.co.uk

D16 Software works with...?

A. Apple B. Melon C. Peach

By taking part, entrants agree to be bound by the competition Terms & Conditions.

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Entrants must be aged 18 or over. 2. Entries close 11.59pm GMT on 12 April 2021. 3. Prize is as stated and is non-transferable and non-refundable. 4. There is no cash alternative. 5. Only one entry per person. 6. There will be one winner and three runners up. 8. Winners will be notified by email 14 days after the competition closes. For full terms and conditions email info@beatsnetwork.co.uk Promoter: Beats Network Limited, 34 Westway, Caterham, Surrey, England, CR3 5TP

Beats working

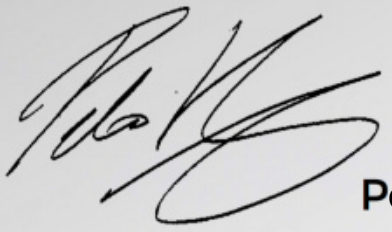
Every drummer needs Rhythm. Exclusive lessons from our expert team...

Welcome to Beats Working, the part of the magazine aimed at helping drummers of all abilities to develop and progress. Kicking things off this issue, Colin and Erik and I are all looking at a variety of rhythmic and independence ideas in 3/4 time in 'Getting Started', 'Creative Concepts' and 'Technical Difficulties', respectively.

Next in 'Four-Piece-Fills', Jason Bowld explores some two-way triplet ideas, while in 'Percussion Toolbox' all-round percussion guru Pete Lockett begins his exploration of playing the bongos with some essential rhythms and techniques.

Finally, Mike Sturgis continues his look at the more cerebral aspects of making music, here exploring the sometimes conflicting concepts of imitation and inspiration.

Enjoy!



Pete Riley, Beats Working Editor

Introducing our expert tutors (and who/what their biggest source of inspiration is).

PETE RILEY

In his 35 years of playing, Pete has recorded and toured with a wide range of artists from Guthrie Govan to Keith Emerson (ELP). He's also been active in the world of education for many years, started writing for *Rhythm* in '93, has been teaching at ACM for some 21 years and more recently at WaterBear in Brighton.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"A very tricky one to pin down to a single person – I would say it's probably an even split between Simon Phillips and Dave Weckl with elements of Bozzio, Gadd, Steve Smith, Vinnie and The Rev."

JASON BOWLD

Jase has been the drummer for Welsh rock/metal titans Bullet For My Valentine since 2015. He began drumming aged 12 and turned professional at 21. He joined UK industrial legends Pitchshifter from 1999 to 2007, during which time his session drumming career took shape. He's played with Killing Joke, Pop Will Eat Itself, Fightstar and even Bill Bailey.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"My biggest inspiration was my best friend at middle school! Music composing inspiration comes from my parents and their eclectic collection of albums. My favourite drummer right now is Dan Mayo, and I love listening to UNKLE for cinematic groove inspiration."

ERIK STAMS

Born and raised in NYC, Erik has over 20 years of performing, recording, television, film and teaching experience. He's performed and recorded with artists including Jamie Lawson, Zervas and Pepper, Butch Thomas, Jon Langford, The Glyndebourne Touring Opera and The Darling Buds. He is head of drums at BIMM London.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"That's always a difficult question. So many great artists. But for me, it's gotta be Steve Jordan – drummer/ producer/multi-instrumentalist and all-round dude."

PETE LOCKETT

Pete is one of the most versatile multi-percussionists on the planet and has played a dizzying range of instruments with artists including Björk, Peter Gabriel, Robert Plant, Michael Nyman, and the Pet Shop Boys; and on a plethora of Hollywood films. He continues to tour worldwide as a soloist, collaborator and educator.

WHO OR WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"The infinite and complex web of rhythmic possibilities!"

Image: Leon Morris/Getty Images

MIKE STURGIS

A 15-year veteran of writing for *Rhythm* magazine, Mike has appeared live and on record with artists including A-ha, Steve Winwood, Jack Bruce, David Bowie, Elton John, Tom Jones, Bob James, Asia, Beverly Knight and many more. He plays with Redtenbacher's Funkestra and The Staks and is head of education for DIME Online.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"Tony Williams! His playing seems almost transcendent and reaches me a on a deep, emotional level. He was also a serious composer and his work is highly regarded by some of the greatest jazz artists of our time. He was a complete genius of a musician."

COLIN WOOLWAY

Colin has been playing and teaching drums professionally since 1976. He has done every kind of gig including eight years with rock icon Suzi Quatro. He is the founder of the Drumsense teaching programme and has written for *Rhythm* for over 20 years! Colin teaches at studios in Twickenham, The Brit School and ELAM.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATION?

"Jon Hiseman was my first real big influence. I love the music of his band, Colosseum, I love the sound of his drums and I love the way he played, as if he was conducting the band from the drum set!"

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For the featured tuition videos go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Getting Started

Learn fractions the easy way with **Colin Woolway** breaking down 4 over 3

Hello everyone, and welcome to another 'Getting Started' lesson, although I must admit this one is a bit tricky and is as much a lesson in problem solving as it is achieving the end result!

We are going to play four notes in the space of three, usually referred to as '4 over 3', and I think a nice way to approach this is in 3/4 time.

Ex 1 shows a bar of 3/4 swing with a bass drum on beat 1 and a snare drum on the 'and' of beat 2.

In Ex 2, we play these notes on the snare drum – notice how the notes are evenly spaced. For the third and fourth bars, we will match two hands together and give an impression of playing two evenly spaced notes per bar.

Ex 3 takes a leap forward, by playing two bars of quarter notes on the ride cymbal, two bars where the hands match, providing equally spaced notes, and then two bars playing four notes in the space of two. This will give us our four notes in a 3/4 bar.

The Practice Challenge shows a really logical way of breaking this concept down: playing 16th notes in a 3/4 bar gets you 12 notes, which can be broken into four groups of three. The first bar shows you what that looks like, and the second bar gives you a right hand against left hand, or: '4 over 3'.

For Colin's video lesson go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

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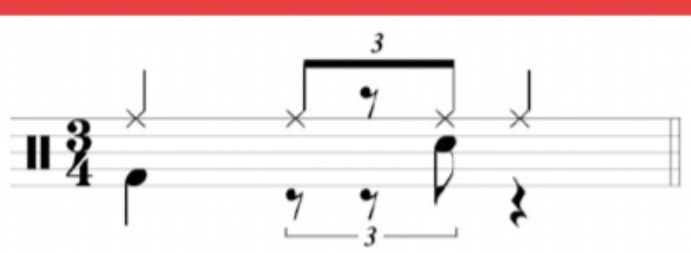
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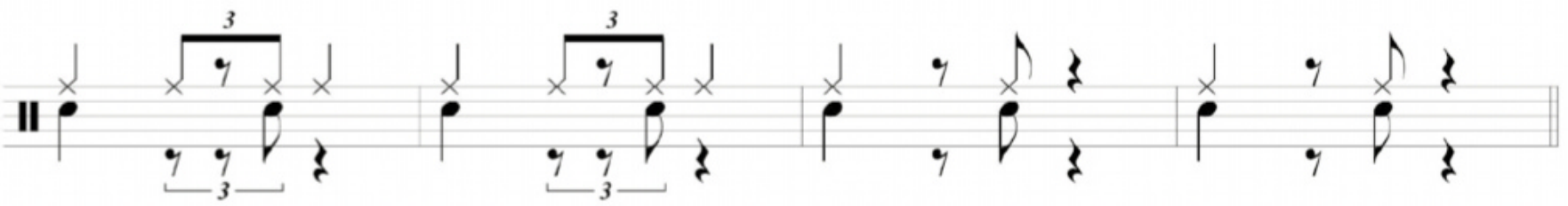
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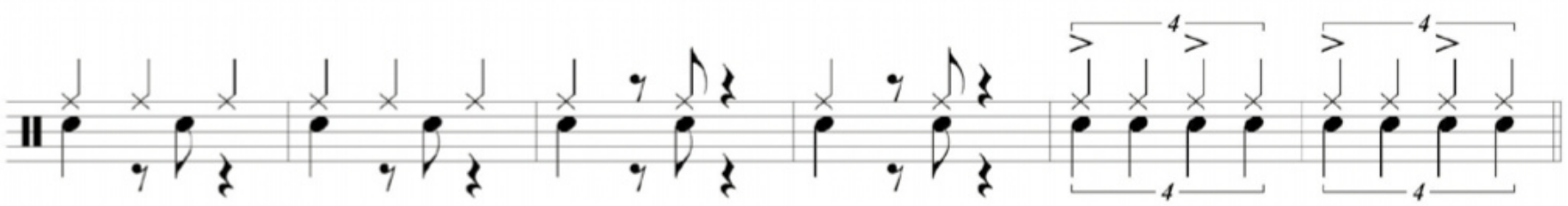
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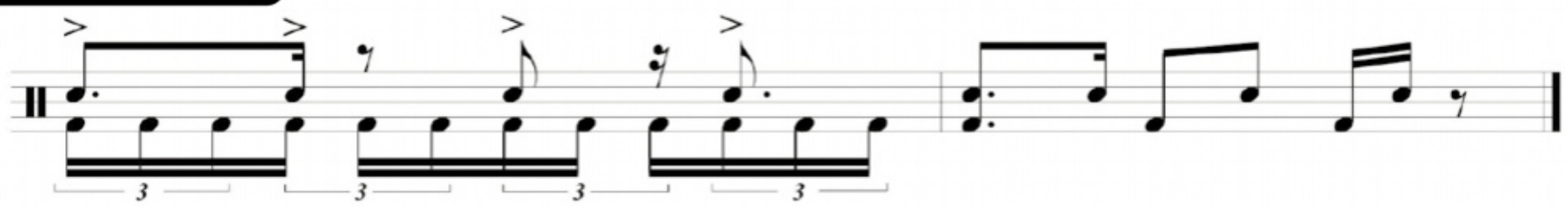

Creative Concepts

Improvising jazz in 3/4 time with **Erik Stams**

Welcome back. In this issue, we are looking at playing jazz in 3/4 time. In particular, we'll focus on developing the ability to improvise and comp within this time signature.

A time signature is the numerical fraction that appears at the start of every piece of music and gives us a metric framework within which to perform. It tells us how to count the music we are playing. It tells us nothing about tempo, volume, style or even what to play. The top number tells us the number of beats per bar, and the bottom number tells us the rhythmic value of those beats. Thus, 3/4 equals 'three quarter-notes per bar'. Put simply, this tells us to count to three.

Let's start with a jazz ostinato in 3/4 (Ex 1). This is effectively a modified version of a traditional jazz ride and hi-hat pattern. In this case, the hi-hat is on beat 2. There are many variations of this. Check out 'Footprints' by Wayne Shorter, 'All Blues' by Miles Davis and 'Afro-Blue' by John Coltrane to hear this groove in action.

Practice this on its own for a while and focus on keeping the quarter-note pulse driving on the ride cymbal. Once this feels good, we can begin to introduce the snare drum and bass drum. The end goal is to be able to comp freely while maintaining the groove.

For Erik's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

To begin with, we need to develop sufficient coordination skills. The following exercises will help.

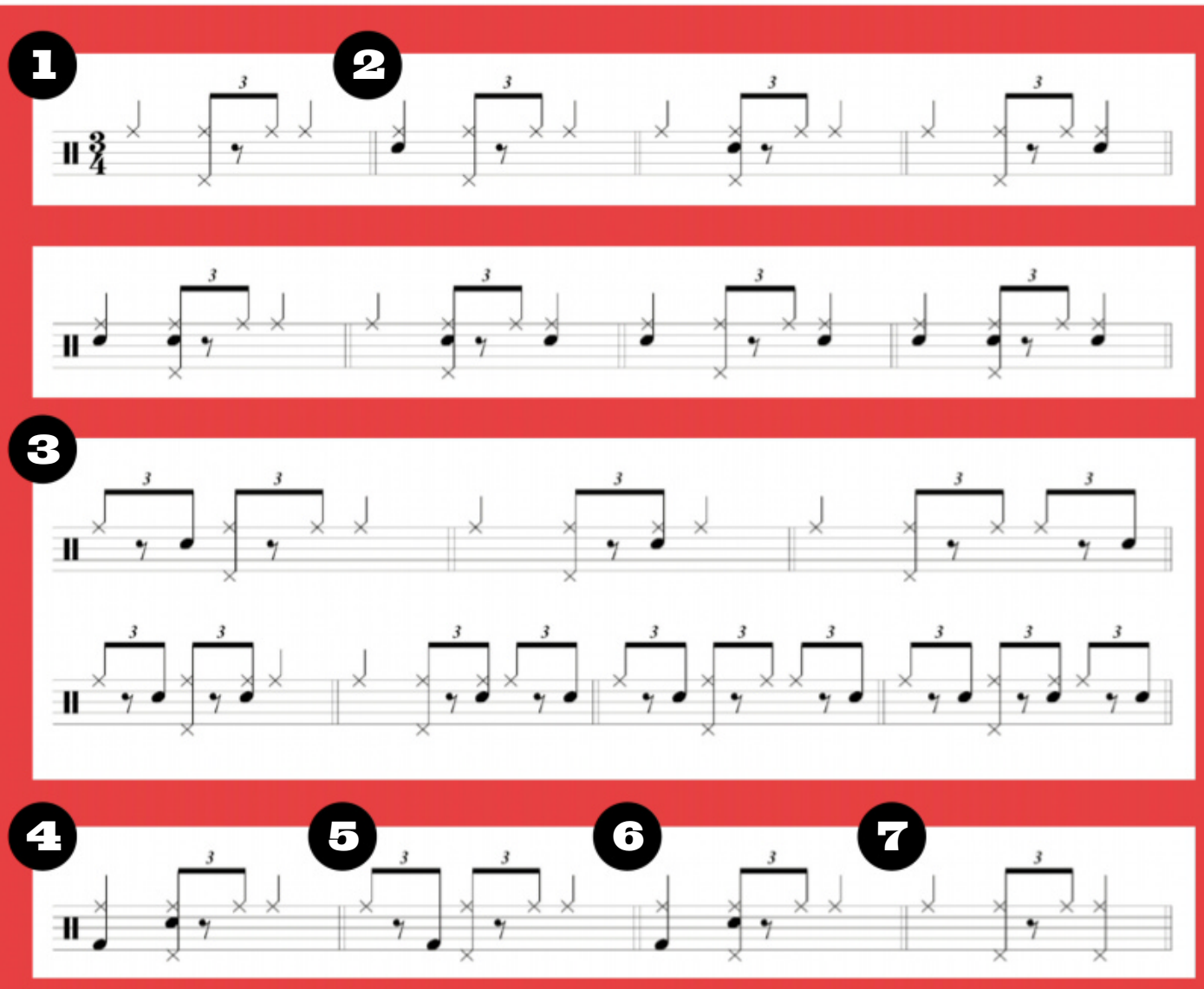
Ex 2 shows quarter-note snare drum placements against the 3/4 ostinato. Ex 3 illustrates off-beat eighth notes. Remember to swing these with a triplet feel.

Once this feels comfortable, try to add the bass drum on beat 1 as part of the ostinato (Ex 4). Next, interpret all of the previous comping exercises lightly on the bass drum (Ex 5).

Ex 6 illustrates melodic interplay, or a conversation between the snare drum and bass drum (as discussed in Issue 298). Here's a useful practice method:

2 bars snare / 2 bars bass drum
1 bar snare / 1 bar bass drum
1 beat each
Reverse melody (bass drum first)

Finally, try Ex 7 which illustrates a different stepped hi-hat pattern, often used by Art Blakey and Max Roach.



Heads up

Comping
Comping, derived from 'complement' or 'accompaniment', for drummers is phrasing on the snare and bass drum against the jazz ride and hi-hat pattern, and is how we frame, react to and embellish the melody of a song or soloist.

EXAMPLE NOTES
1 Jazz ostinato in 3/4 time.
2 Quarter-note snare drum placements.
3 Off-beat eighth notes placements (swung).
4 Try all previous exercises with the bass drum on beat 1 as well.
5 Try all previous examples on the bass drum.
6 Melodic interplay.
7 An alternative ride cymbal/ hi-hat ostinato.

Technical Difficulties

Polyrhythms explored in this issue's 4 over 3 coordination lesson with **Pete Riley**

The '4 over 3' polyrhythm can be a very effective way of developing coordination in a 16th-note rate. To generate the polyrhythm, we simply need to accent every three 16th notes in 3/4 – this could be thought of or visualised as four dotted eighth notes over three quarter notes.

Its use as a means of developing coordination becomes apparent when you realise that these four notes land on the four possible single 16th-note placements relative to the quarter note – in order, the '1', the 'a' the '&' and the 'e'. So the ability to play these on different limbs against a time pattern played in the right hand means you'll address all of the possible single 16th-note placements in the space of three beats.

In Ex 1, we kick things off with the right hand playing eighth notes, emphasising the quarter note. This emphasis is important, otherwise you'll just be playing 2 over 3 in the left and right hand, respectively. The left hand then plays the 4 over 3 rhythm, whilst in Ex 2, it's played on the bass drum.

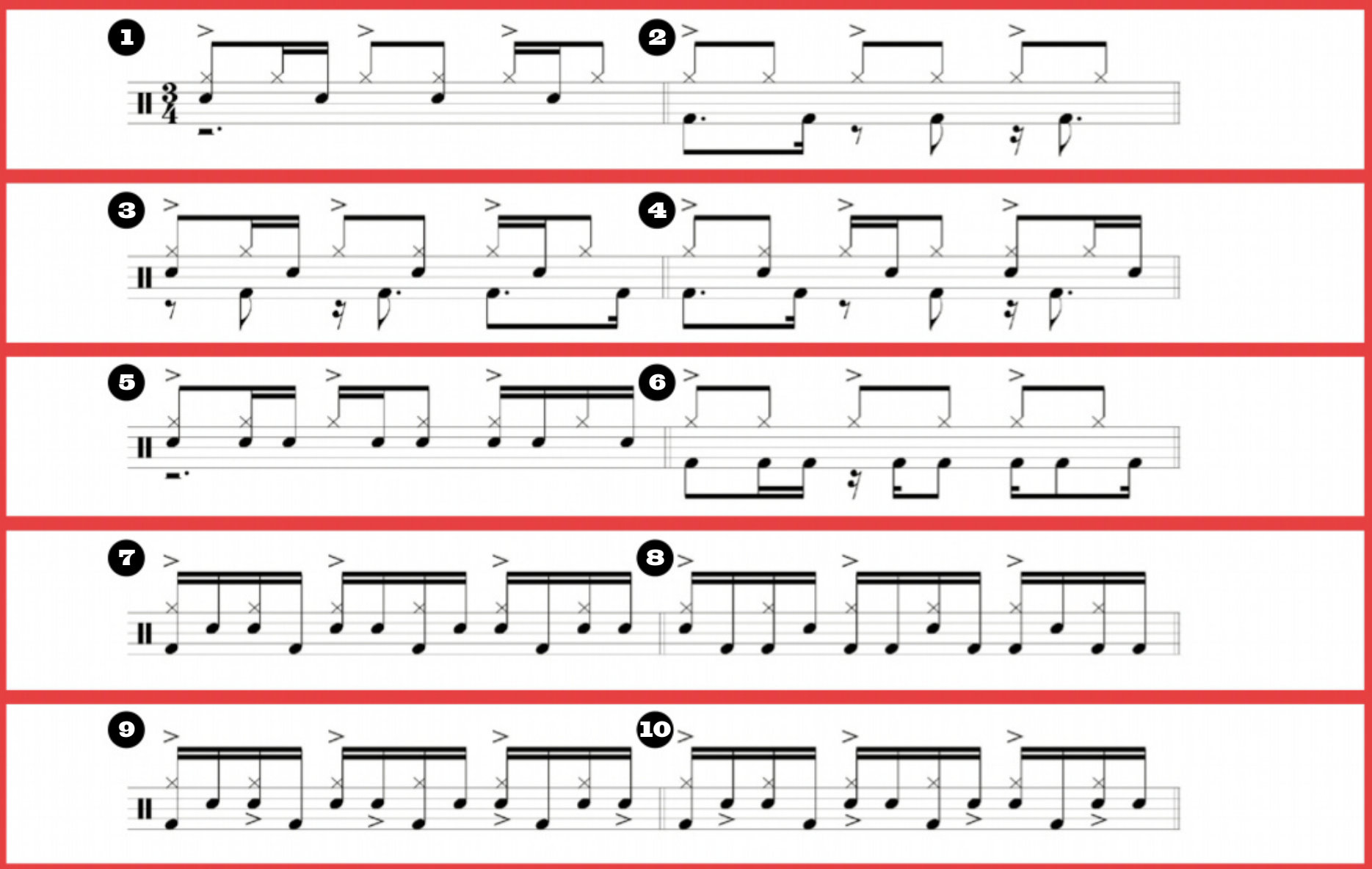
Next in Exs 3 and 4, the snare and bass drum play a counterpoint of the same rhythm, one eighth note out of sync.

In Ex 5, we add what could be regarded as a pick-up note in the left hand (or bass drum in Ex 6) to create what feels like a shuffle rhythm, but played through the 16th notes. The idea here is to emphasise the second of the two 16th notes.

Ex 7 plays the 4 over 3 rhythm on the bass drum, only now the left hand fills in the missing 16th notes as ghost notes. Whilst Ex 8 reverses this to place the bass drum between the snare notes.

Finally, Exs 9 and 10 are the most challenging of all as they take the pattern played in Ex 7 and accent the first or second notes on the snare.

If you're ready to push the envelope a little bit further, you could move the right hand to the ride cymbal and try stepping the left foot on quarter notes. Or, try changing the right-hand pattern – to broken 16th notes, for example.



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Four-Piece Fills

Give your rolls more texture with these ambidextrous fills from **Jason Bowld**

Image: Ryan Chang

For Jason's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

The four-piece fills we are looking at this issue involve playing triples. It's important not to get these confused with 'triplets', which relate to the note value. Instead, triples are relating to the amount of notes – groups of three, fast 32nd notes, to be precise – that lead with both hands in this lesson!

That is the challenge, and starting with Ex 1, you'll see the 32nd-note triples are placed amongst a 16th-note fill. On closer inspection, the first triple starts with the left hand and, mid-bar, two triples are played subsequently that alternate the leading hand.

This ambidextrous approach is more effective than the 'normal' sticking method.

Ex 2 flies in with left-handed triples that create 'hertas' when combined with the 16th notes. Once again, halfway through, the leading hand swaps to finish the roll around the toms.

Finally, Ex 3 shows a short musical sequence. This example is played faster than the previous examples and so is more challenging. The first two bars are played on the snare and repeat with a building kick drum. The groove then plays for three bars that features a 'triple' fill involving the entire four-piece kit!

Heads up

'Normal' sticking

At a slower speed, the 'normal' way to play triples is to lead with the same hand. But as we are playing faster, more textural fills, leading with both hands is the best way to retain power.

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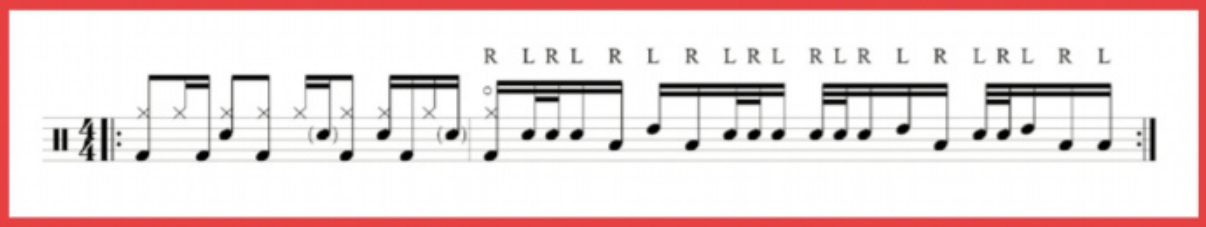
This fill actually starts on '1-e' with the first triple. Strong wrists are needed to keep the triples sounding compact and powerful, especially when played subsequently, such as on '2 &'.

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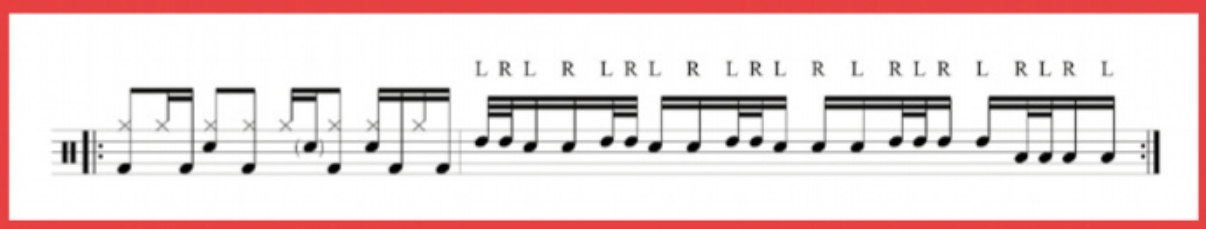
You can view this fill as featuring 'hertas' that lead with the left hand in the first half and the right hand from '3 &'. Again, focus on wrists for 32nd notes and arms for 16th notes travelling around the kit.

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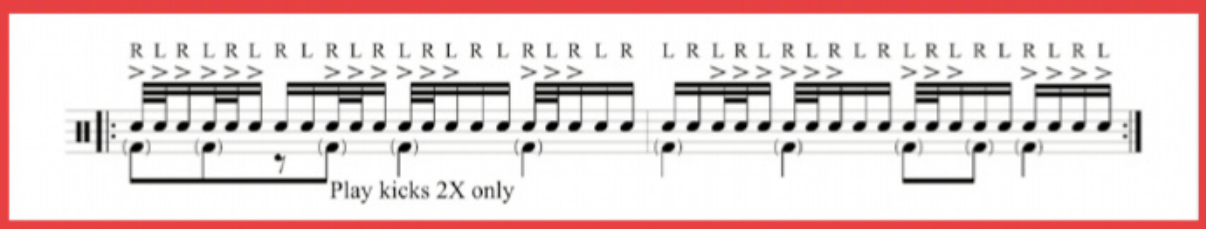
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Percussion Toolbox

Pete Lockett is your guide into the wonderful world of bongos – here, he demonstrates different techniques to get you started

It remains a mystery to me why bongos are not, outright, one of the most popular portable percussion instruments out there.

They are extremely versatile, cut right through on top of a track, can be used as a rhythm or as a solo instrument and have a great range of different techniques and styles to draw on from all over the world.

They are found, in one guise or another, in Indian, Brazilian, Afro-Cuban, Arabic, jazz, pop, rock and classical music – and more! To me, they are the most qualified of the 'under-exposed' percussion instruments easily available to the modern player. My world would be a huge amount worse off without bongos as part of it.

Admittedly, at first glance there are a few techniques and muting techniques that might appear more complicated than the djembe or cajon, but, like any instrument, there is a whole line of simple techniques that can be used very effectively straight away.

As you will see from this article, to get going definitely does not require a degree in Egyptology and the Myths of Ancient Mesopotamia. We will debunk that right here!

In many cases, bongos are played sitting down, although it's absolutely fine to stand-mount them (Latin Percussion (LP) do some great low bongo stands as well to take the weight off the legs).

If we look at the image on the right, we can see the way the drums are held between the legs, with the smaller drum on your weaker side. It takes a while to find the most comfortable position – be patient with this and don't squeeze your legs together too tight. It's important to remain as relaxed as possible. Much more detail on this, as well as the technique and rhythms in this article, can be found in the accompanying video for this lesson on the *Rhythm* YouTube channel.

HOLDING POSITION.

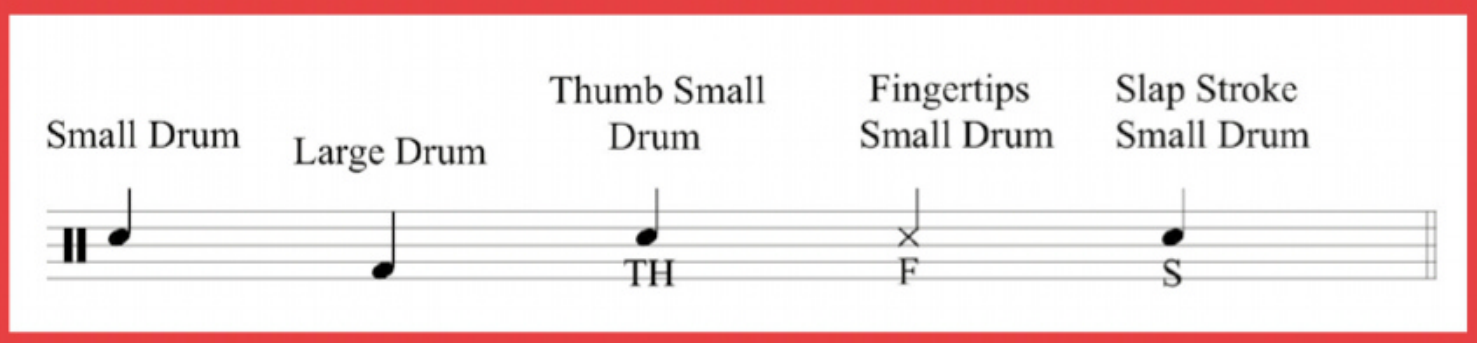
In Spanish, the larger drum is called 'hembra' (female) and the smaller one, 'macho' (male). When tuning the drums, the small drum should be tuned really high. The larger drum should be tuned a fair degree lower than this (and actually, traditional players tune this larger drum a lot lower).

HEADS UP

With natural drumheads, don't be put off by the loud pops and bangs that occur when you tune them high – this is the normal settling of the head in place. If you do use these natural heads, then it is super important to de-tune them after a gig, practice session or recording.

KEY

There are a wide variety of strokes and muting techniques on the bongos. Here, we will start off with the very basics.



Open Tone on Small Drum

The high-pitched sound is articulated by striking with the tip of the first finger for quieter playing or with all the fingertips for louder playing – traditionally, players tend to use all the fingertips in that style. The fingers should strike as near the edge of the drum as possible and should create a very high-pitched tone. In preparation, start out with this simple, evenly spaced repetitive pattern with both hands on the smaller bongo.

R L R L R L R L

Try to make the strokes as soft and even as possible, and try a few different speeds. Make sure the hands do not get further than a couple of inches from the drum in preparation for each stroke.

TREBLE TONE ONE FINGER

TREBLE TONE FOUR FINGERS

Now we can move onto Ex 1 on the next page and add some accents into the mix. Simply moving the hand further away from the head before striking creates an accent. If we were travelling one or two inches for the unaccented strokes, then double that to four inches for the accented ones.

For Pete's video lesson go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

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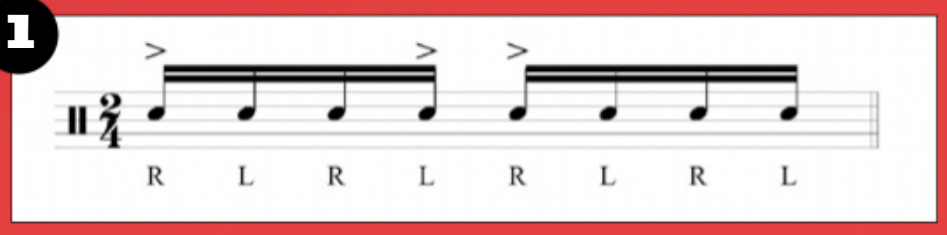
Let's add in the open tone on the larger bongo. This is played with the first finger, or all four fingers, slightly in towards the centre of the larger drum than the treble tone – but not too far towards the centre (see the images). This helps accentuate the bass tone by bringing out some of the lower harmonics.

Experiment by hitting the bass drum near the edge as with the high drum and see how different the sound is as you move further into the head.

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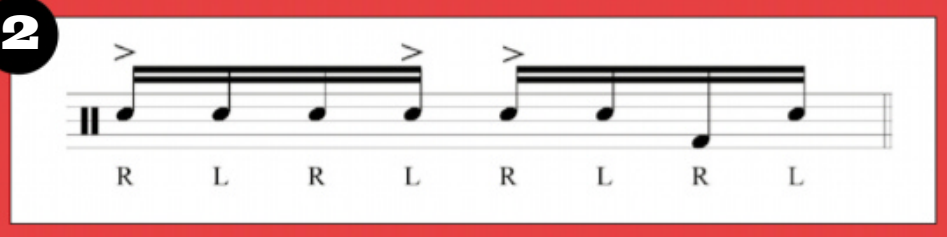
Now we will try a slightly different accent pattern. Everything else stays exactly as it was.

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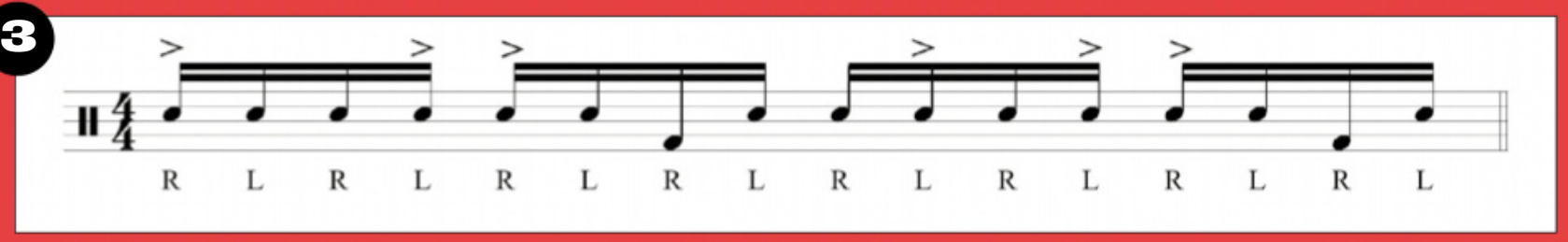
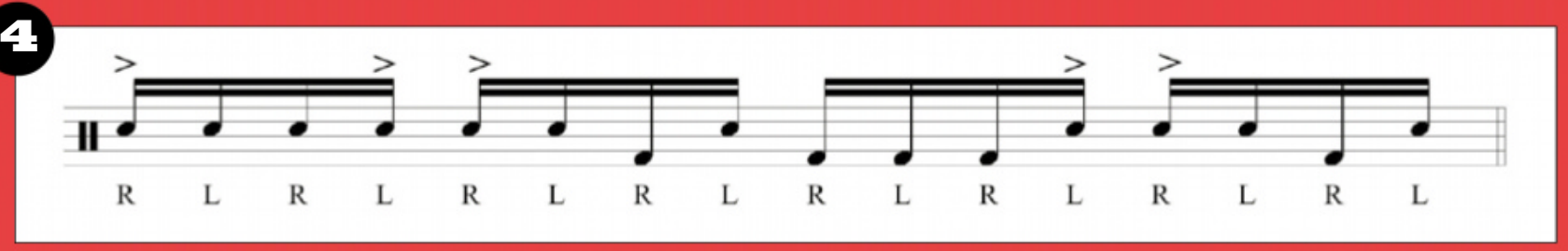
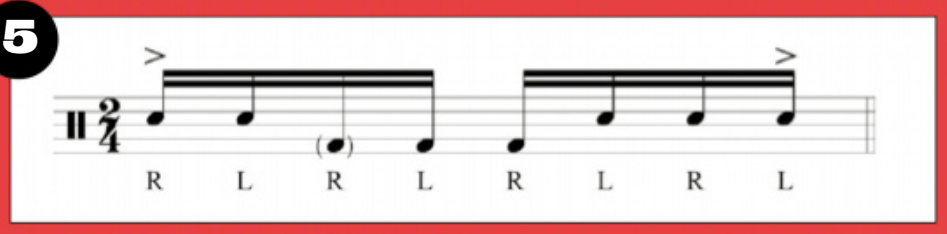

Next, another accent pattern and a few additional hits on the lower drum. This will involve both hands on the lower drum for some strokes. Make sure to keep evenness between the open bass tones for both hands. They should sound the same.

4

The next accent pattern is based around a samba feel, where the first and last 16th of each group of four is accented. Anyone who has heard any samba before will immediately recognise this rhythmic feel. Note here, the bracketed note on the lower drum is to be played quietly as a ghost note. This is really clearly explained in the accompanying YouTube video.

5



Finally, a couple of very common accent patterns in 2/4 to wind up this article.

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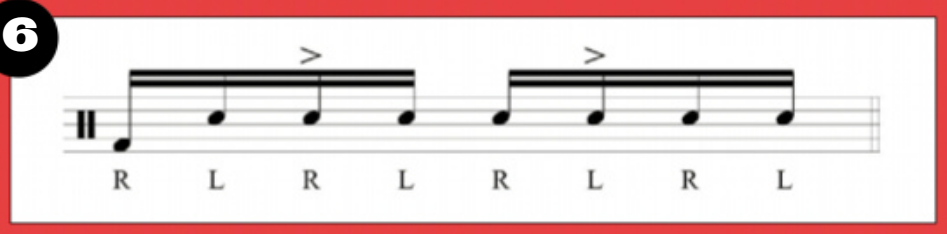
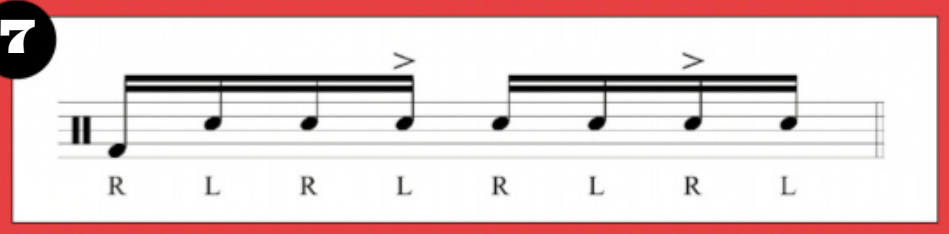

BASS TONE FOUR FINGERS

7

Next issue, we will continue on this path and add in some different muted and slap tones.

Bongos are a really worthwhile addition to any percussionist's or drummer's stock list of instruments. Even getting the basics down can really be a lot of fun.

Go! BonGO!

So, You Want to Play Hybrid?

Create your own sounds on the fly by blending samples together says **Tom Bradley**

Sometimes it can be tricky deciding exactly which samples to choose for a specific track. Should you go with a hand clap or a tambourine layered over your backbeat? The club kick or the 808 on the bass drum?

In this issue's lesson, we'll be having our cake and eating it, too, by blending two samples together – all from within the sound module itself. This can be a particularly useful feature for creating samples on the fly, negating the need for computer software, which is commonly how we would create samples from scratch.

Our hybrid setup for today consists of drum triggers for the kick, snare and a floor tom – all of which are running into the Roland TM-6 Pro. Despite this capability existing in other modules, it's worth mentioning that this isn't necessarily a basic feature that you'd expect as standard from any e-kit module (as has been the case in previous lessons). Look out for 'Sub-Sample' or 'B-Sample', which usually indicates this functionality.

Tech Talk

Sub-Sample A secondary sample, which can be mixed with your main sample and, in some cases, responds in a completely different way. This could also be referred to as a 'B-Sample'.

On the TM-6 Pro, all we need to do is turn on the 'B-Sample' and assign our secondary sound. We can then decide how much of each one we hear in a custom mix.

Getting a little more advanced, we can use the 'Fade' function to only allow the second sound to play at a chosen velocity. We're using this setting to add a kick drum sample to the floor tom to give it more low-end attack with harder strikes.

The mixed bag of exercises below demonstrates three suggestions for blending samples together, but the sky is the limit. Check out the accompanying video for a full demonstration.

Watch Tom's lesson now at www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

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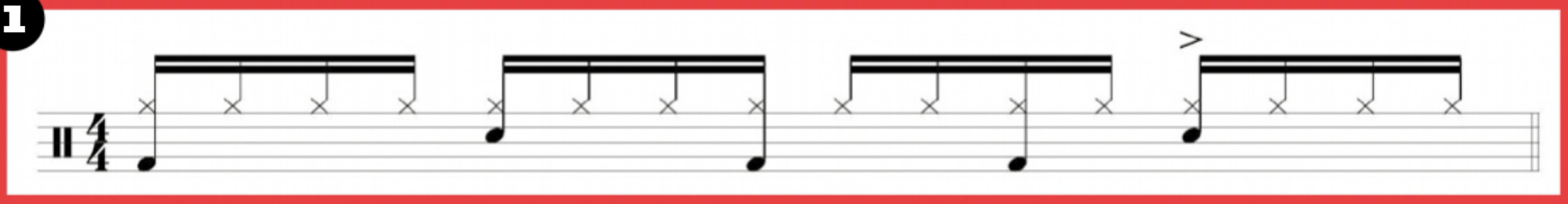
In the first example, we will play beat 2 on the head of the snare only and beat 4 as a rimshot – triggering our layered sounds.

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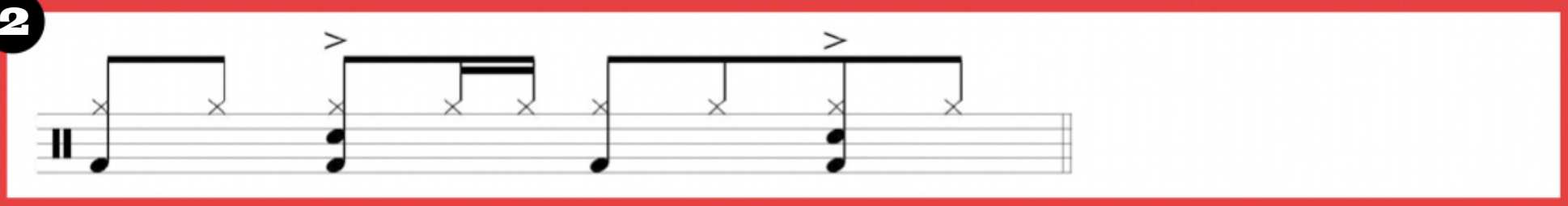
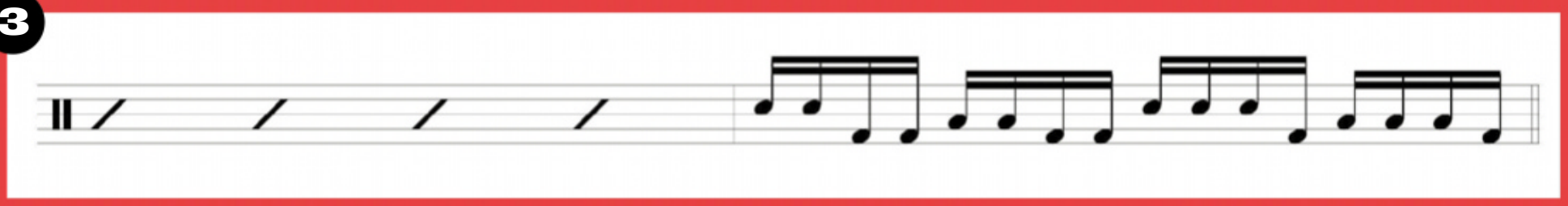

This club-style four-on-the-floor groove is the perfect showcase for our monster customised sub-kick.

3

This 16th-note linear fill is enhanced by the punchy, kick sample-enhanced floor tom.

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GOOD OR BAD IMITATION

Mike Sturgis explores the sometimes conflicting concepts of inspiration and imitation

It is probably safe to say that every single musician who has ever lived has tried to imitate the work of other musicians who have inspired them. No one exists in a vacuum, and most musicians can point to specific people and credit them with being an influence.

The tradition of emulating the greats is an important one, and it's this conscious act of connection that often inspires people to start playing an instrument and embark on a lifelong journey of furthering their skills. And while this is a wonderful thing, there is also a potential risk of sounding contrived or cliché when you imitate someone else.

Ironically, being too good of an imitator may even create the perception that your style is inauthentic or unimaginative. An even worse scenario is when you might be trying to imitate one of your idols, and for whatever reason, you are unable to pull it off. At this point, you will almost certainly have a credibility issue with your peers and your audience.

So, if imitation in music is almost unavoidable, how can we discern the best way to use it to achieve our goals while we enjoy the journey of absorbing and reproducing something that has impacted us on such a deep level?

A Lesson from Tony Williams

Where the boundaries fall with regards to 'appropriately' imitating your idols is purely subjective and will vary according to the context. However, one thing is clear: great musicians typically create their own distinctive voice through a deep and intensive study of their favourite players, followed by a distillation (and re-expression) of the musical ideas they have absorbed during this process.

A fantastic example of this mindset is the late Tony Williams. Widely regarded as one of the most innovative and influential drummers ever, Tony exploded on the jazz scene with the Miles Davis band in the early '60s with a style, sound and vocabulary that was completely fresh –

Tony Williams

Image: David Redfern/Redferns

and remains the benchmark for jazz and jazz-fusion drumming today. When asked how he was able to create his own phenomenal musical voice, Tony had the following response:

"When I was a kid, for about two years I played like Max Roach. Max is my favourite drummer. Art Blakey was my first drum idol, but Max was the biggest. So, I would buy every record I could with Max on it, and then I would play exactly what was on the record, solos and everything. I also did that with Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, Jimmy Cobb, Roy Haynes and all of the drummers I admired. I would even tune my drums just like they were on the record.

"People try to get into drums today, and after a year, they're working on their own style. You must first spend a long time doing everything that the great drummers do. Then you can understand what it means. Not only do you learn how to play something, but you also learn why it was

Image: David Leisser

played. That's the value of playing like someone. You can't just learn a lick; you've got to learn where it came from, what caused the drummer to play that way and a number of things. Drumming is like an evolutionary pattern." ('A Lesson from Tony Williams' courtesy of Ed Soph.)

Finding Your Path

It was this unwavering commitment to the comprehensive study of his main influences, along with the tuition and mentoring of drumming legend Alan Dawson, that enabled Tony's unique genius to be fully expressed. And while this provides us with an inspirational model for our own musical development, we should view this type of immersive approach to learning in the context of our own self-knowledge and the world we are living in now.

In his book *Flow*, author Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi reminds us that we ▷

Max Roach

Image: Leon Morris/Getty Images

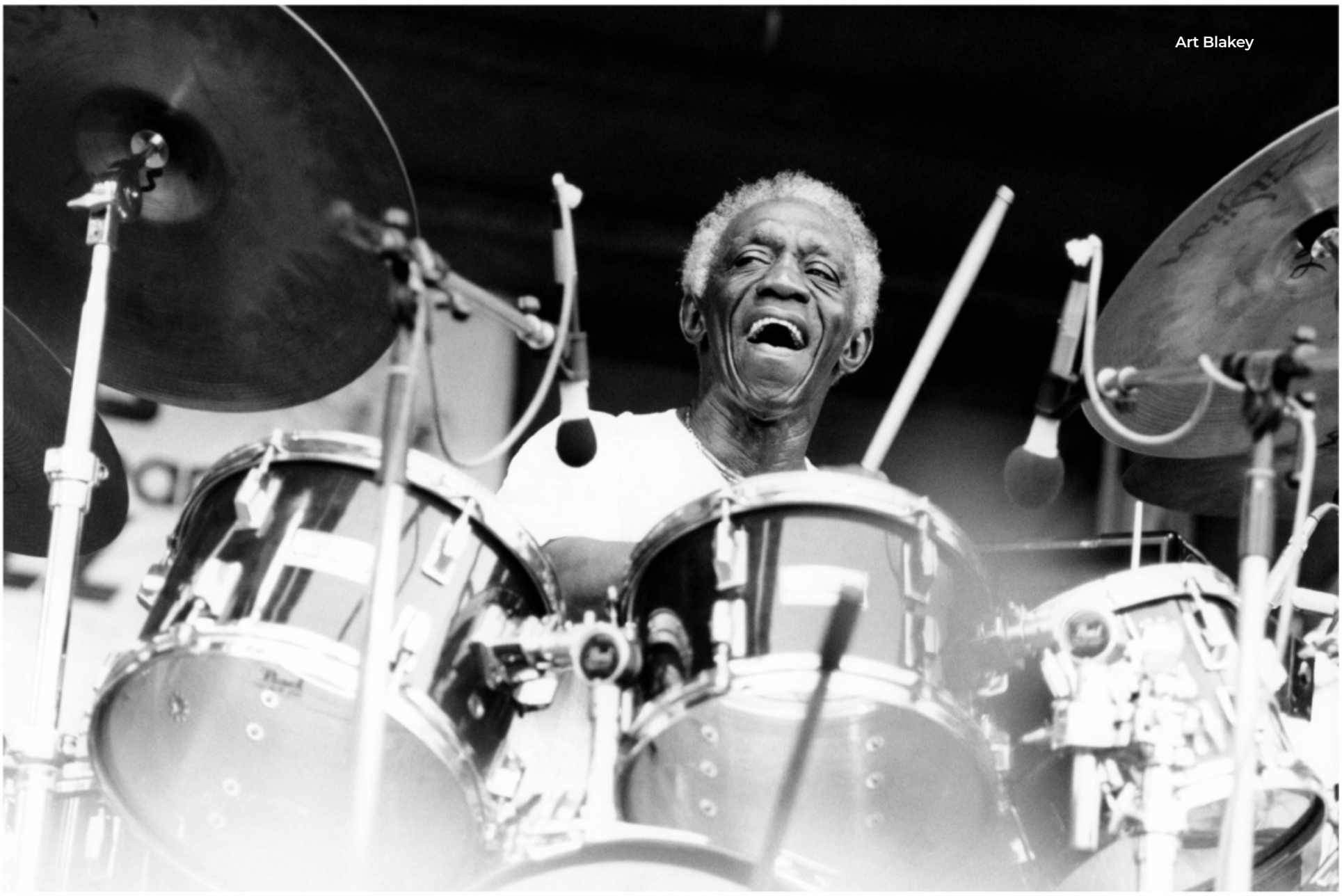

Image: David Redfern/Redferns

should be asking ourselves important questions before we invest substantial time and energy into a goal: Is this something I really want to do? Is it something I enjoy doing? Is the price that I have to pay worth it? While these questions might seem basic, it's important to know your own feelings before you can plan and undertake meaningful action.

We now have access to an avalanche of musical information via different platforms, but this unprecedented freedom of choice can sometimes devalue the music or create uncertainty of purpose. Fewer choices, such as only being able to listen to and study the music in your own record collection, can help us to focus and have greater clarity.

Also, it's important to stay current with your goals and expectations. Not all of us may aspire to be an innovative voice like Tony Williams – as a working musician, it can be a real advantage to not be overly attached to one way of playing and be able to adapt what you do to a variety of different scenarios. We may even be asked to sound or play like other iconic musicians depending on the requirements of our endeavours.

Therefore, it may be more appropriate to our own needs (and to our own enjoyment) that we study in a way that reflects breadth over many areas than depth in just a few.

"THE TRADITION OF EMULATING THE GREATS IS AN IMPORTANT ONE...THAT OFTEN INSPIRES PEOPLE TO START PLAYING..."

To find this balance for ourselves, we need to integrate both self-reflection and action. There are no absolutes, and each person should look inside themselves and find what resonates with them. And while for some (like Tony) this may be very clear on an intuitive level, for others it may require a process of trial and error.

Conclusion

Without forgetting some of the potential risks, proactively studying and imitating the playing of your favourite musicians will help you to create a reservoir of technical and conceptual knowledge that may even lead to the development of a unique (and influential) musical identity.

And whether you do this intensively with a small number of recordings or in a broader sense with many, the music you listen to will always shape how and what you play.

Most musicians are learners for life and will go through many different phases of their development. With this mind, keep checking your inner compass to feel confident that the investment of your time and efforts aligns with your musical objectives.

www.dime-online.org

You can also contact the author at:
www.mikesturgis.co.uk

My thanks to Steven Cerra for his excellent blog entitled 'Tony Williams 1945-1997: The Unpredictable in Jazz Drumming (Revised and Expanded)' and for jazz drumming great Ed Soph, who provided 'A Lesson from Tony Williams' within the blog.

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Six of the Best

STEPHEN PERKINS

"You never want to do a part and then it's silent in the control room," says Stephen Perkins, whose irrepressible energy drives six cuts from punk to funk...

Jane's Addiction

Track: 'Trip Away'
Album: *Jane's Addiction*, 1987

"Me and [Dave, guitarist] Navarro were so young, we wanted to have a lot of events in our parts, a lot of fireworks. Perry [Farrell, vocalist] and Eric [Avery, bass] were 10 years older than us – they were past that experience and wanted to tell stories. That's this great marriage of what 'Trip Away' is. I'm so proud of the very first record being live – it was basically what you got out of a rehearsal straight onto the stage."

Jane's Addiction

Track: 'Ted, Just Admit It'
Album: *Nothing's Shocking*, 1988

"*Nothing's Shocking* was this great live punk rock band that now had time to explore the studio and make that part of the process. I've got pictures of my drum set when I recorded that – I've got woodblocks and timbales, single-headed drums, a piccolo snare, ice bells. I really wanted to have this lyrical drum part to start the song. We had this great feel – it's not sloppy, it's slurpy. It's almost like being in a river of jelly."

Jane's Addiction

Track: 'Then She Did'
Album: *Ritual De Lo Habitual*, 1990

"It's a perfect marriage of lyric and music. It's a song about Perry losing his mom and his girlfriend. It's about loss. That was where we understood the dynamics from hot to cold, from punch to massage. We understood how a band can let the music breathe. That day we lit the candles, put the lights down and got into a mood. We wanted to capture this experience of pain. I think we nailed it."

Infectious Grooves

Track: 'Infectious Grooves'
Album: *The Plague That Makes Your Booty Move... It's the Infectious Grooves*, 1991

"Rob Trujillo's bass parts are like Flea on steroids, so I had to rethink my kick drum pattern because there was so much bass going on. I wanted to fit but still bring my personality – which is hyper, talkative, bubbly, positive, upbeat. I wanted all that to come out in my drum part. I did my thing and looked into the control room. They were jumping around, high-fiving. When I see people react, that turns me on."

Nine Inch Nails

Track: 'I Do Not Want This'
Album: *The Downward Spiral*, 1994

"I got to be friends with Trent [Reznor] during 1991 Lollapalooza. He didn't have any songs – he had different tempos he wanted me to write drum beats to: 'Here's a click at 97bpm, go for it for 30 minutes'. Trent really showed me this new way of writing songs. It's about the sound of it, about the way it's been treated, the way it comes and goes. Like a sponge, it absorbs, then you squeeze it and it dissolves out."

Porno For Pyros

Track: 'Porno For Pyros'
Album: *Porno For Pyros*, 1993

"I put together a drum kit that had a 10" tom, bongos, 16" tom, timbales. I took most of the cymbals out, so it's all about drums. I'd come up with grooves like an egg. If you take an egg and roll it down a hill, it's got a hump to it. I wanted all these beats to have this repetitive hump. I think that song really captures that experience of me stepping away from Jane's Addiction and trying something fresh."

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